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BOOK OF THE CITY™

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Just Another Good Stop

"I'm telling you that if we don't get her to a doctor within the next couple of hours, she might die, and the baby won't make it without her." Eagle stared back through the rearview mirror as he spoke. It was pouring rain as the pack's van sluiced its way down I-80; the road would have been seriously treacherous if there were more traffic, but that late at night — and in that weather — there was hardly anyone out. Eagle spared a glance for his alpha, Peregrine, eight or more months pregnant and badly injured to boot.

Eagle rubbed at his left side. Peregrine wasn't the only one injured; some of the security guards that the Mystic Raptors had run into while monkeywrenching that tire plant had been armed with silver weapons. That had implications Eagle didn't feel like thinking through in a rainstorm. He returned his attention to the wheel, and the road.

Peregrine lay half-reclined and semiconscious next to Watcher. Watcher, a tense young Black Fury, spoke with clipped precision.

"Women gave birth for ten thousand years without help from doctors, Eagle, and we're Garou, not human. She can survive *childbirth*," Watcher spat. "We need to get Peregrine out of this goddamned... minivan... and to a glade or a caern. Now."

Owlbite turned around from the passenger's seat and looked over his left shoulder. Dreadlocks spun and flopped as he did, and he pushed a pair of wire-rimmed glasses up his nose as he spoke. His accent was faintly Jamaican. "We're on the outskirts of Toledo now. I heard there was a caern in the city. And Watcher, you know she's not just pregnant. Some of the metal in her gut is silver."

Watcher made a face, and fished a deformed snippet of silver from her jeans pocket. She held it up, between two fingers. "Yes, I know. I pulled this one out of your jacket, remember?"

Owlbite sighed and waved a hand at the air, "Yeah, ah, thanks, but you just made my point for me. She can't—"

"Yeah, I know, no shit," Watcher said, teeth bared. "So if she goes into labor with shrapnel in her belly, she's fucked, and since it's silver we can't go in after it all tooth and claw."

Eagle flipped the turn signal and prepared to get off the highway, interrupting before the argument got worse. Tempers are short enough, he realized, and the pack couldn't afford infighting. He waited for Watcher to take a breath and interjected: "Oh, and we're entering Toledo now."

"Toledo... they make good swords there?" Peregrine murmured, not entirely awake. The argument paused, at least for the moment. Eagle looked over at Owlbite, who valiantly tried to suppress a grin at the pack alpha's comment. Watcher leaned toward Peregrine with a canteen of water, gently shushing her, then glanced forward, looking at Eagle through the mirror.

The wind picked up, pelting the van's windshield so hard that Eagle thought for a moment the rain had turned to hail. He nodded to Watcher, then announced to no one in particular, "I'm pretty sure I have enough room left on Dad's credit card to get a motel room for the night. I'm sorry, I... know we're supposed to be tough and hardy werewolves and all that shit, but I don't want to go sleep under a tree in a thunderstorm."

Watcher sighed loudly enough that Eagle guessed she had something to say. "Yes?" he asked a little more sharply than he intended.

"If you two think we need to find a doctor right away, why are we stopping at Ed's Beds?" she said. Eagle brought the van to a stop and the end of the offramp, flipped it into park, and turned around angrily.

"Listen, dammit, you've been—"

"Eagle," Owlbite intoned, "she's right. We should get somewhere safe, and then try and find the caern tonight. I'm sure the sept has got a healer that can help us."

Eagle gritted his teeth and took a few calming breaths. Watcher looked at his face but didn't meet his gaze. Eagle thought she looked a little worried. "I'm sorry," she began, "I don't mean to antagonize you, I'm just—"

"I know, Lauren." Eagle paused a second. "We all are." Owlbite looked behind Eagle's seat, at Peregrine, who didn't seem to recognize that any of them were there.

"This is easier when Peri can make the decisions," Owlbite said with a half-smile. "Eagle, park the car, then you and me can head downtown, try and find the caern. You're a Glass Walker, you should be comfortable in the big nasty scar, right?"

"Hey, whaddya mean, you two go and we stay here? I could go," Watcher said, "Eagle might be a Glass Walker, but c'mon, he's from the suburbs. Of Cleveland. And it isn't like Toledo's a real city, more like a pit stop on the way to Detroit."

The rain continued to pour on the van's roof. Another car pulled up behind the van, still standing at the stop sign at the bottom of the offramp; the car flicked its headlights once, then drove around the pack's vehicle and turned onto the main road there.

Eagle watched the car's taillights vanish into the gloom. He knew Owlbite was right, but didn't have the patience to argue with Watcher about it.

"Okay," Owlbite began patiently, ticking off points on his left hand as he went, "First, Eagle has to go. He's a Glass Walker, and the caern in town — I think it's the Black Swamp Caern or something like that — is supposed to be a bunch of urrah." Owlbite reflexively flinched as he used the term, but Eagle ignored the profanity and the Jamaican continued.

"Second, you are something like three feet at the shoulder in Lupus, and jet black. I mean, it's really impressive, but Gaia's tits, the humans are going to notice you no matter what. He's a Glass Walker, I'm Uktena, we're... mutts. We look kinda like big dogs in Lupus. At least from a distance...at night... but it's better than nothing. Third, if Peri goes into labor Eagle and I are basically useless. All I remember is that Laura Ingalls had to tear sheets and boil water when her mom went into labor. And fourth, if we're being followed, you are probably better at defending Peregrine than any of us other than Eagle, and we already agree that he's got to go along."

Eagle put the van in gear. He saw through the mirror that Watcher nodded, then leaned over out of sight to get her labrys from under the seat. Eagle drove across the way and parked the van in the darkened parking lot of a boarded-up failure of a fast-food restaurant. Eagle turned the car off and gave Watcher the keys. "I know you don't know how to drive," he said, "but it's an automatic. If you get in trouble, just remember, put it in D, for Drive, and it's gas-left, brake-right." Watcher nodded, keeping her attention focused on Peregrine. Eagle wasn't sure she'd heard him, but he reached down and put on his holster, wriggled himself into his overcoat, and opened the van door.

Eagle sighed. Rain that had been pleasant to listen to in a motionless car was not particularly inviting now. We're supposed to be big and tough werewolves, he told himself, and stoically stepped out of the car. Owlbite did the same, though with less hesitation and more cursing. Eagle looked over at Owlbite, water pouring down his face. "Damned if I'm going to walk the whole way there like this," he said. "Let's make some time."

The two Garou flickered effortlessly through their forms and settled in as wolves. They began the long jog down to the riverfront.

• • •

In just a few minutes Eagle and Owlbite were soaked to the skin. Eagle spent the first ten minutes of their jog pretending to find the rain exhilarating, and

the next ten minutes pretending that it just didn't bother him very much. He was secretly happy to see Owlbite's composure slowly degenerate as well. They continued at a huffing jog through the suburbs until the run-down outskirts of Toledo proper began to obscure the more distant lights of Downtown.

Owlbite found an intact awning over a tenement apartment's entryway. The place looked to Eagle as if it had been burned out; there were scorch marks on the brick around most of the windows, and those windows were boarded up. But it was dry, and that counted for something.

"We should announce ourselves, you know," Eagle said in the half-growling tongue the Garou shared with no other. Owlbite shook his head ruefully.

"In a rainstorm, in the city, you think anyone's going to hear a howled 'HEY YOU GUYS'?" the Uktena said.

Eagle shook his head no. "But we should try anyway. It can't hurt—"

"—except to drag some Wyrmthings down on our heads."

"Owlbite..." Eagle didn't have to finish.

The Garou tilted their heads back slightly, stretching out and howling a long, complex series of notes. It wasn't a chord exactly — the two deliberately stayed out of tune with one another, as wolves do — but it was a progression that conveyed information to any Garou listening: *We are Garou from another sept and we need help.* The howls echoed off of nearby buildings, and in the distance Eagle could hear yips and barks from dogs throughout the neighborhood, as well as some shouts from nearby humans. The pair listened for a minute or two, but didn't hear anything like a werewolf's answering howl. Owlbite looked at Eagle expectantly as water dripped indecorously from the tip of his tail.

Eagle closed his eyes and tried to think about what to do next. He'd been in Toledo once before since his Rite of Passage, but he hadn't gone to the local caern, just crashed for the night with some Kinfolk while on his way further north. That was years ago, but he couldn't think of anything else, and he didn't want to reveal the depths of his own ignorance about the place in front of his older and worldlier packmate.

"I think I remember an address," Eagle whuffed. "This way."

The two headed off into the rain again. Eagle noticed that Owlbite's ears were perked up, and his head was on a swivel as they ran. The Uktena had always had better senses than he, and Eagle assumed that Owlbite sensed something hostile nearby. The other werewolf didn't try particularly to get Eagle's

attention, though, so he assumed that Owlbite hadn't noticed anything certain.

After about twenty minutes the pair came to an apartment building in the city's university district. The rain had stopped, leaving only cold breezes that shoved dark clouds around in front of the moon and stars — not that those would be visible from here even on a clear night. There was more activity here than elsewhere in town, young humans up late studying, talking, and drinking. The pair stopped in an alley across the street from the building, next to a convenience store. While out of sight, both werewolves rippled through their shapes into human form. Eagle leaned over to Owlbite's ear, pointing at the stoop of the apartment building across the way.

"That bum, sitting on the stoop — that's crazy old man Mamatas, I'd swear it. He was lolling in that exact same position the last time I was here. Cripes, I think that's the same plastic cup he's got sitting next to him."

Owlbite looked skeptical, but the pair headed across the street and up onto the stoop. The drunk had all but passed out, but he stirred as Eagle stepped over his leg. The man's well-worn and stubbled features fixed on Eagle.

"I know you!" Mamatas said. He pulled himself to his feet, unsteadily, then leaned forward, challenging them. "You came here years ago, hung out with the goddamn hippie pagan freaks for a couple days!" Eagle looked surprisedly at the man, and nodded. "Got some change?" the old man asked. Eagle considered this for a second or two, then spoke.

"I might have a couple of bucks if you could tell us if everything's okay here, and if my friends in this building are doing okay."

"What?" the old man fairly shouted, "the goddamn freaks? No, they moved out a couple of months ago. I think they had termites or worms or some disgusting thing."

"Shit," Owlbite murmured under his breath. He reached out and dropped a dollar into the old man's cup. "Did they say where they were moving to?" The old man's eyes blazed with mockery and barely suppressed rage.

"What, talk to me? After I was their neighbor for years? Goddamn no-good lousy pagan freaks, no, they didn't tell me a damned thing. Nobody's moved into their apartment, either. Oh, I was up there, door's unlocked, place stinks."

Eagle didn't believe for a moment that the man had ever been a "neighbor" to anyone inside these apartments, but he simply pushed his way forward and into the building. After a moment, Owlbite joined

him, abruptly ending his conversation with the old man. Together, the young men headed up the creaking wooden stairs and into the building. Eagle stopped at the top, at the first door on the right. The door had a padlock latch slapped onto it, and a brand new padlock through the latch. Owlbite and Eagle looked back and forth at one another, neither one speaking, for an uncomfortable moment.

Eagle finally gave in. "Oh, okay, I'll do it. Nobody's around." His shape contorted and bulged and he took a larger, somewhat more bestial shape. Eagle grabbed the padlock in his right hand and pulled while twisting. As he expected, the new padlock latch tore off the cheap door long before the lock itself showed any sign of distress. Eagle pushed on the light door; the thing swung open silently, revealing a filthy room. The pair took a few steps into the apartment.

Eagle, still wearing the bestial Glabro form, sniffed at the air. "Blood, smoke, and shit. Animal waste, too. I wonder how long this place was unlocked after they left. I mean, if Mamatas got in here, I wonder who else did." Owlbite nodded, only half-listening. Owlbite's eyes seemed to glaze over, becoming almost milky as he surveyed the apartment in the spirit world and spoke in an eerie monotone.

"Death, here. Pools of blood still dripping. Three lived here; one escaped. I see bloody footprints running out the door..." The Uktena trailed off, staring at the floor and moving through the apartment in slow, careful steps. He seemed to be following a path.

Eagle lost sight of Owlbite as he walked into the kitchen, but after just a few seconds he heard an "Aha!" and Owlbite poked his head back out, his eyes normal again. "Check this out!" Eagle joined him in the kitchen, where Owlbite was studying scratches in the countertop.

The scratches were in the form of Garou glyphs. Not in the usual marks of clawed fingertips, though; it appeared that someone had scrawled the message with a knife. Eagle read the script aloud: "Danger... Wyrm... human soldiers - police, maybe?... uhh, I don't recognize this one... caern... riverside?" Owlbite leaned in and pointed at the unfamiliar rune.

"That's "retreat" or "defend." My guess is they came under attack, maybe by the police,



Gaia only knows why, and fell back to the caern, which must be on the waterfront. I guess we head down to the river and start sniffing around." Eagle nodded in agreement, and the two of them left the apartment.

"...and what the hell was his accent, anyway? Lebanese?" Eagle asked Owlbite as the pair tromped back down the main stairwell.

"What, did he look like Jamie Farr? I think he was Greek. I'm sure he was just another Mediterranean-looking freak to you." Eagle decided that silence was the better part of valor.

As the two Garou reached the door, Mamatas lurched into their path again, waving a tattered and coverless book in his left hand. "Before you go," he explained to them breathlessly, "I have starry wisdom that I must pass along to you." Eagle stopped — he couldn't well go down the steps and off the porch with the drunk in his way — and waited for the old man to convey his wisdom. The vagrant spoke, couching his words in a conspiratorial tone: "Autobiographical means 'homosexual'! Watch your back!"

And with that, half a dozen dark shapes leapt from the bushes beside the two Garou.

Eagle slid into his war-form without a second's thought, instinct immediately taking over.

In slow motion, Eagle saw Owlbite's eyebrows rise and his mouth shift into an "Oh..." as Mamatas shrieked, stumbled down the stairs, and ran for his life.

The young Ahroun didn't pause for long enough to learn who these enemies were; they didn't flee from the sight of him as Crinos, and that was enough. He lunged forward and down one step, striking at one man's chest with the butt of his palm and sending him flying backwards into the street. Owlbite leapt over the side of the porch and out of sight; Eagle paid him no mind, knowing his packmate would run distraction against the enemy's rear.

Five, he knew, but had lost track of one. The others — faces only half-visible, the leer of madmen all around — seemed hesitant, confused that they had lost the advantage of surprise so quickly. Eagle made a grab at one of them with both hands, but the freak nimbly jumped out of his way as two others grabbed at Eagle. One of those grabbed his left arm with both of its skinny arms and bit down, clamping on for dear life. Eagle bellowed angrily — it didn't hurt that much, he distantly realized, it was just inconvenient — and reached to claw the freak's innards out with his taloned right hand. The creature kicked off the pavement, hanging on his arm for dear life and keeping his midsection just out of Eagle's reach. Adding to the chaos, the one man — man? — he'd lost track of took

the opportunity to stab him in the left kidney. He bellowed again, and lost the world in a red haze of fury.

When the haze cleared, Eagle was in Homid form, on the sidewalk a few blocks from the apartment building. Owlbite stood on the balls of his feet in front of him, ready to take a bounce backward. The Uktena looked considerably worse than he'd looked the last time Eagle saw him — his clothes were bloodied and torn, and one of the handcrafted necklaces Owlbite usually wore was gone. His mouth opened and closed spastically, and Eagle couldn't figure out why for a long moment — he didn't see any food in there.

The pounding of his heartbeat began to fade, and the sound of Owlbite's words synced up with the motion of his mouth: "...down, big guy, it's okay, they're gone, we drove 'em off, it's okay, Eagle, it's your buddy Owlbite, no need to hit me again, Eagle, can you understa—"

Eagle nodded. "I'm okay. I'm okay," he repeated, shaking his head to clear it. "What'd I miss, or, ah, do?" Owlbite tapped at his own right ear with a single finger in response:

"No time to discuss. Sirens. We gotta go. Waterfront."

Eagle sighed tiredly and nodded — not in agreement, but in acknowledgement of his friend's statement. As his frenzy ended, the fatigue of the fight, and the aches and pains of half a dozen new flesh wounds on top of the sore spots from the other fight that day all got their fingertips onto him. He bent over and put his hands on his knees to catch his breath. "Owlbite, I don't have a lot more in me."

Owlbite's ligaments unknit and reknit themselves as he changed back into his wolf's shape. The Uktena padded forward such that he could look up into Eagle's eyes. He spoke in the mother's tongue, the ancient half-growl speech of the Garou: *At least you aren't giving birth. Come.* The Uktena turned and padded away, tail in the air.

"I really hate you, y'know," Eagle told his friend. Owlbite paid him no mind, and Eagle shifted back into his wolf's form and followed his nose toward the waterfront.

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The Maumee River caught fire every few years; decades of industrial waste poured from Toledo and its vassal communities into the waterway unprocessed and gurgled from there right into Lake Erie. Every new state administration swore it would do something about the filth, and ended up in the pocket of the same corporations that had owned the previous administration. Thinking too long on this sort of

thing, Eagle knew, would lead to Harano, so he tried to quash the thoughts as they loped toward the river. The distant metallic tang certainly smelled like fifty years of pollutants.

Eagle whuffed in the Garou language: *Sometimes I almost understand, when the Red Talons want to burn all the scabs.*

Owlbite replied noncommittally; Eagle got the impression from the way the Uktena carried his head and tail that his friend wasn't up for a conversation on the topic. He dropped it.

They reached the river within about twenty minutes; that oxidizing smell Eagle had noticed earlier only got stronger as they approached. They stopped near a jetty, the concrete of a city road plunging straight into the water. "As if boaters would want to buoy themselves on that shit," Owlbite said after emerging into homid form. Eagle didn't change shape; he didn't hear any humans around, but the area didn't feel safe to him. "Give a howl of introduction, see if you can get their attention," Owlbite suggested. "If they're still around," he added after a pause.

Eagle took a breath, thinking that most of the Glass Walkers he knew didn't bother with an actual Howl of Introduction; that's what cell phones were for. Before he could either howl or protest, though, he heard a second howl. It was a distant wail, carried on the wind from the outskirts of down: *Danger. Sisters need aid. Urgent. Wyrm-servants.*

"Shit," Owlbite said, echoing Eagle's own feeling on the matter.

Every Wyrm-thing in town will hear Watcher's cry for aid, he whuffed. Owlbite nodded. Eagle got to his feet, though he didn't feel safe enough to slip all the way into his homid form. He got most of the way there, into the Glabro form that Owlbite always called "Chaney." "One of us needs to get to them. The other one has to—" Another howl, much closer, in response:

Rush Hour comes.

Eagle finished: "The other one has to make sure that whoever comes from around here has a midwife, or at least a Theurge. You go. I'll find the locals. Go fast. Carjack somebody if you have to." Owlbite smiled ruefully, and muttered admiration for the suggestion as he ran off. Eagle shifted into his secondary war-form — the dire wolf — as fear-goaded adrenaline pushed his aches and pains aside for a second time. He howled to announce his presence for a second time in the evening, in the hopes that these Rush Hour Garou would notice and come to him before running off. Then he loped down toward the water's edge and started to jog upriver, in the direction of the earlier howls.

Before five minutes had passed, a series of call-and-respond howls and barks had led Eagle and this other pack close to one another. It was like playing Marco Polo, Eagle thought to himself. They first saw one another from opposite corners of an empty parking lot; the attendant's booth was empty and locked, and a chain blocked the entry to the lot. The whole scene was lit by an unwavering single light from the only working streetlamp on the block. Eagle counted five across the way from him: all wore human form. All male, too. Eagle remembered with a flash of panic that neither Owlbite nor Peregrine — who could easily smell the taint of the Wyrm on others — were around. He shifted up to his war-form, and fumbled around at a few of the fetishes that Owlbite had made for him. Just in case.

The others were watching, waiting. It was hard to see facial details from here — the two he could see clearly had darker skin than he did, maybe Asian or Native American. One of those two had a number of feathered trinkets on hand — a Theurge, Eagle guessed. Behind them were and three scruffy looking guys who looked like they'd slept on the street until just a few minutes ago. Bone Gnawers.

Eagle cleared his throat and half-growled, half-spoke. "I am Armored Eagle, Glass Walker of the Mystic Raptors. My alpha is badly injured, on the outskirts of your city. I fear she might be under attack right now. I know you probably heard her howl. I need to get to her, quickly, but I need a healer." There was as yet no reaction from the pack. "A midwife, if you have one." The eyebrows of the Asian man out front rose, and he took a step forward. The others' reactions suggested to Eagle that he was the pack's alpha.

"I am Astram," he said in a calm and level voice — barely audible across the parking lot — "and this is my pack, Rush Hour. Do you have a car, or did you just jog halfway across town?" Eagle blushed slightly, then tried to put a stern look on his face.

"We naturally assumed that our packmate would be safer in the shelter of the car, outside of the city. We seem to have been mistaken. We — that is, I — came on foot." Astram looked skeptical; two of the Bone Gnawers — were they Bone Gnawers? — whispered back and forth to one another.

"So, are you alone, or did you come with someone else?"

Eagle tried to contain his frustration — he didn't need his hackles to rise, or show other signs of rage in front of these strangers. They didn't have time for this. Peri was in trouble. But if these Garou were thralls of the Wyrm, he couldn't very well confess to being alone; he'd be killed. He settled on a safe lie.

"My packmate is watching from a distance. He can get to my alpha rapidly, on his own, but he lacks the medical skills we need. We do not have a lot of time. If you can help me, I humbly ask that you do so now. If you can't," he swallowed nervously, "then I need to leave right now."

Astram turned to the Theurge and quietly asked a question of him. The Theurge shook his head, murmuring "...he looks fine." The alpha seemed satisfied by this, and waved for Eagle to come forward.

"Stormcrow says you're not a Wyrm-thrall. Come on. We have a car right around the corner. Nosewhistler here," Astram gestured to one of the Bone Gnawers, a short man with a scarred nose and a threadbare Superman T-shirt, "can heal your friend when we get there."

Eagle wasn't entirely comfortable with this, but, he told himself, with their general appearance, attitude, and the names like they had — rather than, say, Skull-raper or Uthulhakya — they were probably all right. It wasn't as though he had a choice. He crossed the parking lot, shifting down into human form as he did so. Astram extended a hand in welcome; Eagle took it, shook it, and then the six of them rounded the corner to the car.

• • •

Only four made the trip across town — Astram sent the other two Bone Gnawers back to the Caern to let the others in the Sept know what was going on. Stormcrow, Astram, and Nosewhistler were remarkably close-mouthed about Toledo's Caern, the Sept surrounding it, other packs, and dominant tribes in the area. Thus it was a quiet ride across town, as well as a fairly short one. Astram knew where they were headed from Eagle's description alone.

The quiet parking lot of the run-down fast-food joint looked like the floor of a slaughterhouse, even from a distance. A dozen or more creatures — half-human, fomori like those that had ambushed Eagle and Owlbite at the apartment building — lay scattered, bloody corpses and fleshy chunks on the concrete. The van's side was spattered with blood and gore, and it had a few new rents in it to boot; the door was half-open, and Watcher's bloody labrys was propped handle-up against it. Eagle was out of Astram's Mercedes before it came to a complete stop, and he heard screaming from within the van as soon as he opened his door.

The wail was unmistakably that of an infant, Eagle thought as he crossed the blood-slicked concrete, but he didn't know the source of the second until he opened the door and saw Watcher and Peregrine within. Peregrine was on her back on the bench seat, feet toward the door. Watcher was perched

near Peregrine's midsection, and had a bloody infant cradled in her left arm. The other hand on Peregrine's abdomen. There was a deep, ragged slice across Peregrine's midsection, and blood steadily pumped from it. Watcher wept, silently, rocking the child as best she could. When Eagle opened the door, Watcher didn't even look up.

"She tried to get into the fight," Watcher said, "she didn't even realize she was pregnant. I killed all of them, Eagle, but she went into labor. She — she — I had to take the baby out of her." Eagle looked at Watcher's right hand, then, realizing the source of Peregrine's ragged wound.

Nosewhistler, Astram, and Stormcrow bounded up behind them. Nosewhistler didn't say a word, just stepped into the van. He whistled with surprise when he saw Peregrine. Astram had clearly overheard the conversation, though.

"I know you're young, but we have hospitals in town. Several. An obstetrician isn't going to turn your alpha away when she's in this much danger, no matter who she is. Didn't you say you were a Glass Walker?" He turned toward Nosewhistler. "Nosey, is she...?"

Nosewhistler had placed both his hands on Peregrine's abdomen, and was murmuring an invocation to Gaia as Astram spoke. Eagle stepped back, out of the way and onto the parking lot. The Bone Gnawer looked up from his ministrations, surprising Eagle with a southerner's drawl. "I think she'll be fine, but you're gonna wanna get her to a hospital soon as y'can. Or at least a birthing center. We don't have the facilities to care for somethin' like this at the sept. And besides, someone's gonna wanna see to that little girl y'got there."

Stormcrow leaned forward and spoke loudly, a bombastic tone in his voice. "And we'll want to ask the spirits as to the girl's true nature. Good that she isn't metis, at least."

Astram backed away from the van, stepping somewhat gingerly over the gore around the vehicle. He handed Eagle a business card. "My cell number's on there. Call us when you're settled in. We will have a place for you to recover. I didn't want to say so earlier, but you obviously need some recuperation yourself." Eagle took the card wordlessly, and nodded thanks. Weight began to lift from his shoulders. Astram gave him directions to the nearest hospital with a promise that it was safe for Garou and Kinfolk alike.

As Astram finished, a rusted compact car with a pitted muffler rumbled its way into the parking lot. Owlbite. Eagle smiled, for the first time in hours.

TOWNSVILLE
CITY LIMITS
• POP 1,143,300 •



Introduction: City Limits

New York makes one think of the collapse of civilization, about Sodom and Gomorrah, the end of the world. The end wouldn't come as a surprise here. Many people already bank on it.

— Saul Bellow, *Mr. Sammler's Planet*

Kevin asked the Garou, "What is a city?"

The Garou answered.

Popping Trees of the Uktena said: The cities are scabs on the Mother's body made by the parasite Man whom the Wyrm infects. We must enter them at times, but should not like them, or the people they destroy to make more of themselves.

I have entered the city Three Rivers, which humans call Pittsburgh, to bargain with a rotten dead thing, to my shame. That was a dirty place. Not only the filth of human's machines, but the filth they throw all round them. But it won food for my pack and me, and so we lived to reach safety in the green hills where we now dwell. Much evil did I see in the city, and two packmates died there. One we left torn by crawling spider-things, and one we had to slay, for she was too wounded to travel further.

I heard that our Kin, Gaia praise them, find lost cubs in cities, human and wolf Kin working together,

and I am glad. May the cubs leave the cities soon as the humans' smoking wheel-thing can take them!

Solomon McKarkle of the Fianna said: The City is a snare where the patterns of signs and streets traps souls and kills them as the Weaver's webs have snared, but not slain, the Wyrm. Don't think that the many humans will give you money or pleasure there, or that Garou can live there. Oh, they can. But they are no longer Garou. Where is Progenitor Wolf in the Glass Walkers? They are trapped, addicted to their clubs and bankcards and drugs and the humans they call "friends." How can they serve Gaia's will when they can walk or run only where the net of streets and subways and trains will let them, can climb only where a stair takes them, can eat only what humans' machines have killed and cooked and packed into plastic and cans? You won't find Great Stag in any city, that I can promise you.

To the Garou whom the snare has trapped: Come free! It is no great difficulty to burn your necktie and cut up your plastic slave-cards. Fire will warm you and game feed you. The War of the Apocalypse rages outside your gated residential communities. You are Gaia's warriors, not accountants and advertising executives and store managers and retail salespersons. Your Kin? Bring them with you as was always so before. They will thrive under our protection: no date rape or heroin pushers or car crashes for the honored children and parents of the People.

Doggie K of the Bone Gnawers said: No, homes, the city ain' a trap for yo' soul. It's a trap for the Wyrm. Th' Weaver made it that way. Keeps getting bigger so th' Wyrm can' get out, then the Wyrm, th' Trasher, he eats its heart out, makes it a fuckin' wasteland. Makes it all fulla bad trash, not th' Weaver's stuff. So the city always gonna grow, but here's the secret. We Rat's pack, and we know the city is the wild, like the jungle. Like the wilderness. And that's how we keeps the Wolf alive in our hearts.

You? You gotta see how you can be wild, I can't tell you how. You gotta feel how t' be wild. It's alive inside you, alive inside anyone, wolfy, human, whatever, that gets to openin' up and feelin' it. Like the guy on TV says, follow yo' bliss. Then yo' see the city fulla shit, but it's our home, the Gnawer's home. And, if you know it, it's not so bad.

Longtooth of the Get of Fenris said: The city is a battlefield, and most humans are prisoners of war. Either they are "winning" — so successful, so pampered that they can no longer make their own fire or find their own food — or they are "losing" — facing genuine hardship, and far too often being broken by it. There are next to no humans left in a city who know what it is to be alive. They are thralls to the Weaver, victims of the Wyrm; they lost the way long ago, and they will never get it back.

But someone must fight, and that is our task. We cut at the webs of the Weaver where they are their thickest, in the hope that the humans caught there may take their first true breath and realize what has happened to them. We scourge out the soldiers of the Wyrm, in the hope that the respite we grant their victims will be enough for them to regain some of what they've lost. We fight because it is our task, and because the world Herself hangs in the balance. And we fight in the city because it is an easy thing to find our foes there. With so many humans crammed up alongside each other, learning to resent one another, it's a feast for Banes. Go into the city, into the shadow of a housing project or an office complex or a whorehouse,

and step sideways. Then try to swing a hammer without hitting one of the Enemy's children.

John Oldway of the Wendigo said: Where the humans live together in great stone houses, these places are a sickness. Just as sickness-spirits live and breed by using beasts and humans to make more sickness, more of themselves, so the scabs use humans to make more scabs. They feed on humans, and as sickness changes and reshapes any it touches, so scabs change the humans who live in them, killing and changing their spirits.

I have seen the land of Tsennecommecah, which the wasitchu calls "Virginia" for a dead woman who was never there, change from, not wild, but farms and hills of green, to houses upon houses and so much blacktop that the rivers overflow because rain cannot soak into Gaia's body. I have seen the snail darter and the Eskimo curlew die, never to return. I have wept where the last passenger pigeon died, all of them dead, not for human evil, but the evil of the city makers, the wasitchu. The First Nations never defiled the land with such foulness and never will.

Can anyone, Garou, Kin or human, cure the city? I do not know.

Mephi Faster-than-Death of the Silent Striders offered: A city is an obstacle course. It's sixty different kinds of walls and barriers, all piled one on top of the other. It's a labyrinth filled with Minotaurs of all shapes and sizes. Yeah, I know what you're thinking, but it isn't just there to block us Garou from running from one caern to the other. It's there to block humans from the Umbra, to keep them from reaching through and seeing the things that might make them feel like they belonged in the world. It's there to keep the Wyld well away from people, and it's there to keep us away from the Weaver's vulnerable spots, so we don't try anything crazy like healing her.

A city is a pain in the ass. But you knew that.

Hotclaw of the Red Talons spoke: The city has a purpose. It's a human nest. I've seen termite mounds great as a hill, home to many-many of the insect breed, and so was Cold Seas Meet, which two-legs call Capetown. No wonder that two-legs like building nests so large. A pigeon shits in its own nest and so do humans.

They're hellish dead places, worse than where a volcano spews poison or a grassfire lays all waste for many days' run. They are two-legs' places and we don't belong there. Any Garou who goes there needs a bath; any who wishes to stay there needs their soul examined. No true Garou chooses the manhive as a

hunting and breeding ground — look at the pseudo-Garou, the Warders of Apes, who are losing the wolf with each generation.

I don't argue for killing all humans, only the offenders against the Mother, and humans are half of the other Garou tribes. Why kill the Kin of kin? Some humans are not evil; they aid Garou and Kin. These are the ones we want in the wild, keeping it alive.

What is the worth of cities? Oh, they have worth, don't deny that. They keep humans in one place. I don't mind that one bit. And two-legs like living in them, near them. They are indeed traps, but for humans. The more humans poison themselves in their hives, and leave us alone, the happier I will be.

It won't be so simple, of course.

Susan Anthony of the Black Furies said: The city is humanity, spread out on the world's largest dissecting table for anyone who has a scalpel to examine it for themselves. Everything humans do, from their noblest sacrifices to their most vicious cruelties, is magnified and laid out for inspection here. The city is crime and pollution because that's what humans are. The city is neighborhoods and church potlucks because that's what humans are. Everything you find in the city is something a human brought there — every murder and every rape, every blood drive and every library, they're all what humans are.

You look at the city and you take a deep breath. What do you smell? You smell the Weaver, lying flat across it from horizon to horizon, all plastic and concrete and glass. You smell the Wyrm seeping up from the cracks, all garbage and shit. You even smell a touch of Gaia, all sweat and sex and flowers and running water. And all that stuff you smell — that's humanity. A city is the largest monument humans ever built to themselves, and they can't stop building those monuments, because they're proud.

And I'll tell you this: Whatever you find in the city, that's something you looked for. If all you find is hatred and violence and apathy, that's all you were looking to find. And it's the same way with humans.

Antony Wall-Opener of the Shadow Lords said: The city is a huge living thing like a coral reef or a wetland, and it's as full of spirit as any of these, or as yourself. You don't need to believe this: only see how the patterns of humans, energy, buildings, streets, spell out life, how things are alive and how they relate to each other. Look at where cities grow on the Mother's body, like salt marshes grow where the sea meets the land, like alpine meadows grow where it's too high and cold for trees.

It's not evil that humans disturb the universe. Is it evil when a forest burns? And then grows back thicker?

When a forest depends on burning, so that "suppressing" fires will kill it? It's not evil when storms or explosions kill part of a reef, and more species live in the newly opened area than before! It's not wrong when humans cultivate our crops as Gaia's partners, mixing and combining plants to attract beneficial insects and birds and increasing water retention and soil fertility. More organisms, and more different kinds of organisms, live in a disturbed coral reef or in a cut lawn than in an uncut grassy field or a reef that is sheltered from damage, from change. Because Change is one of the Mother's faces, one way She has to exist. Change is Gaia.

And cities are alive too. Don't think a waterwheel or a frigate or a sewer system is alive? But you can see the Wyrm-essence in a nuke plant or a toxic waste dump! Why not look for the Weaver-power, even the Wyld's power, in a city's spirit?

Cities live, sometimes die. They're born, and every one is a community of spirits. Cities grow where the flow of transportation pauses, like animals resting between marches, like the communities that grow round breathing holes in the polar ice or waterholes on the savanna.

Soldier-of-Paradise of the Children of Gaia emails: I'm just a dumb sailor from Oklahoma, so why are you asking me shit? But yeah, cities have spirits, powerful ones, and they're kin to the spirits of machines, cars and ships. The ship I'm on, she's almost a city anyway: has an ATM, a store, vending machines, a gym, upper and lower classes, even a civilian we took on as a schoolteacher. Everything but chicks.

I think the common link is that cities are *complexes of tools*. Humans and Garou make tools to change what's around them, and we always have. Ship's a tool to get you there, then kill people and wreck shit. Car's a tool to show off and take you to work or the club. The city's just a lot of tools together till it is an environment. That's a puzzle, kind of. You make tools to make life easier, then tools become your life, everything that's around you. What then? Humans use three-fifths of all Gaia's life. Soon it will be more. What when it's nine tenths? Ninety-nine out of a hundred? How can anything survive when that happens?

I don't know.

v/r

Soldier-of Paradise

Gleaming-Silver-Mane of the Silver Fangs intoned: The city is a shell that humans build around themselves because they fear the world. They fear the wilderness, the struggle for survival. They fear their fellow animals; they fear plants and insects. They fear us even though they do not remember us. They fear

everything that cannot be made to offer them allegiance, and so they build shells to protect themselves. They take smaller shells with them even when they leave the protection of the city, but the city is the largest wall they can place between themselves and the world, and it always has been.

But they are not so clever builders as they think. Their shells are imperfect, and little bits of the world creep in. Their shells stifle them and make them sick, cut off from the fresh air and clean water that they fear so badly. But worst of all, they have built shells so large that their greatest enemy, their greatest creation, is trapped within the cities with them. They keep us out, and they keep the Wyrm in. They have brought a horrible doom on themselves, and none of us can say whether or not we can help them in time—or whether we should.

Mariko Ten of the Glass Walkers, via IM: The City is a thing of incredible beauty and power, the ultimately evolved abode of all intelligent beings, and the home of the only Garou who can survive the change of the world that is on us now. The Wyld dies. We mourn each species that passes, but the Wyld doesn't; conservation, a creation of Weaver-thought, keeps threatened species alive now in zoos and refuges where natural selection abandoned them. If the Weaver's tools are the only way to stave off the Wyrm, we must use them. For all our history we have been half human, half makers of tools and culture and language, not wild animals. We can move forward, with humans and ahead of them. We can become one with the city, with its people, its wolves (for the city has wolves just as the jungle does) and with its buildings and spirits. Look, warriors, at how strong new weapons and new tactics can make the People. Look, sages, at the wisdom that computer-spirits and number-spirits and language-spirits offer the People. Look, poets, at the tales that the City can tell.

Behold the future of humans, wolves, and Garou.

Concrete Wolves

The city is an ambiguous thing to Garou. On the one paw, it's a Weaver-built place full of Wyrm-rot, domain of the vampires, and home to huge, huge numbers of humans. Many Garou cannot abide the noise, stink and crowding of cities, regardless of their tribal or personal background. Even homids raised in suburbs or urban neighborhoods may shy from cities when their improved Garou senses make them too aware of the city's nastiness.

On the other paw, the city is a complex place and its very complexity draws all tribes of Garou, even the Red Talons, for many reasons. Some come

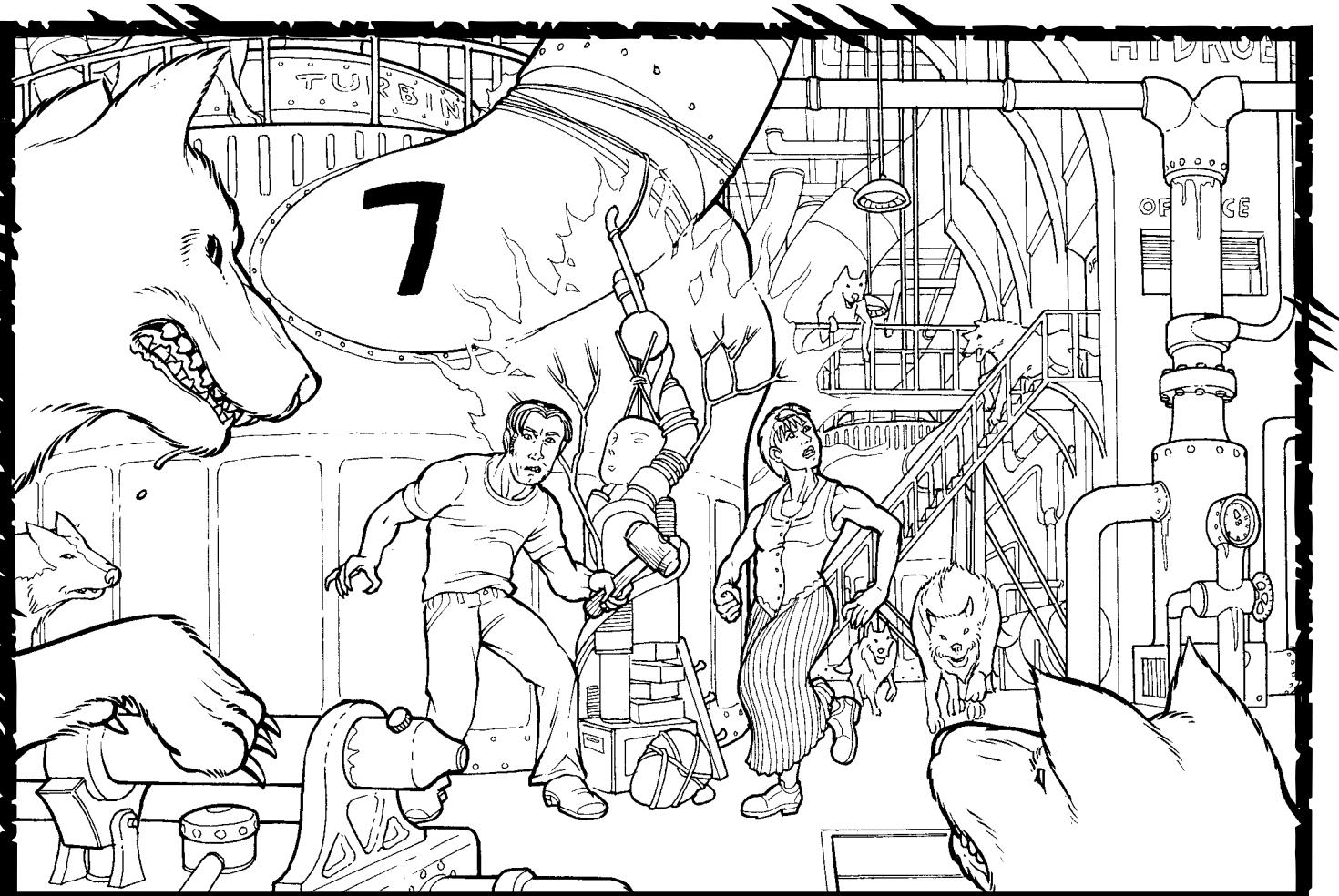
to hunt, some to seek power, some to enjoy themselves, some to understand what cities are and why. For two tribes of the Nation, it is home. The Gnawers often cannot leave for financial and social reasons, while the Glass Walkers could never be persuaded to live elsewhere. Numerous other Garou (especially the Children of Gaia) and a majority of the Nation's Kinfolk dwell in cities, suburbs or small towns. (While Kinfolk even fifty years ago lived mostly in rural areas, this has changed. For one thing, making a living from farming is not practical anymore; even many Native American groups now have a majority of their population in urban areas). Therefore, city and town life is going to be central to many Garou, even if they don't want it to be.

So the city, or more precisely the City, is going to be a part of almost any Werewolf chronicle. The question is how.

Larger Than Life

The first thing to remember about the urban environment in the World of Darkness is that it's considerably less than mundane. Things happen here. While it's easy for some folks to sit at home watching the evening news and feel a safe distance from the city sprawling out around them—a safe disconnection, as it were—that feeling of safety is an illusion. Only the most topical crimes make it into the papers—hundreds more go unreported, their victims voiceless. There are layers upon layers of threats, from the entirely mortal street gang making a home invasion to the wholly spiritual Banes and Weaver-spirits vying to dominate the hearts and minds of the locals. Sure, most people catch a bus downtown, work an eight-hour day plus overtime, then head home without anything bad happening to them on any given day. But that doesn't mean Garou are going to be so safe.

But the cities of the World of Darkness aren't memorable solely for their inflated crime rates and high monster populations. Things are just plain worse overall—subtly so, in most cases, but it all adds up. The faint haze of brown smog that hangs over the downtown area even in the brightest days—it's just a touch darker. The potholes are just a touch more common, and the road crews that patch them up just a touch more incompetent. Blackouts happen just a touch more frequently, as do fires and traffic accidents. Hiring practices are just a touch more bigoted, and jobs just a touch less well-paying. Malls are just a touch more crowded, cashiers just a touch ruder, police officers just a touch less sympathetic. Traffic jams last just a touch longer, asthma attacks induced by pollution are just a touch more severe, and hospitals are just



a touch more crowded (and their losses due to malpractice or simple bad luck are just a touch higher).

But it all adds up.

That's the real catch to the World of Darkness—not that it's worse than the world we live in (although it *is*), but that if we happened to visit the place ourselves, we'd be hard-pressed to tell the difference unless we were looking really hard. Perhaps the only place where the difference would be truly obvious would be the cities, where there are simply so many things that there are so many things that are worse. Even then, we might not notice for a while.

The Garou, on the other hand, notice. They notice that the little details add up to some very unfriendly sums; the more things that go poorly in a city, the stronger the Enemy gets. It's a steady progression, and one that isn't going anywhere pleasant. It may be by only an infinitesimal amount each time; a single carjacking doesn't promote a Bane Jagglng to Incarna, and a minor blackout will snap only one or two threads of the Web, not even enough to free the Wyrm's smallest toenail.

But it all adds up.

How to Use This Book

On the surface, one might wonder why a **Book of the City** is really necessary at all. After all, most Werewolf players either live in cities or visit them on a regular basis, and are pretty familiar with how urban life works. It's not like the Umbra or the Garou Nation—aspects of the World of Darkness that just don't exist in our world, and can't be studied in person. At least, not at first glance.

But in the world of Werewolf, where a very real spirit world hangs invisible on the other side of a mirror and conspiracies of supernatural beings lie hidden among human society, a city isn't as mundane as it might seem. The world that humans read about in the morning paper or watch on the six o'clock news is only a small portion of the World of Darkness, and this is doubly true in the urban environment. Werewolves in particular are readily able to perceive a city that has never been documented in human sources—the spirit city, the urban Penumbra. The physical world is only half of the equation.

Not that the physical world isn't without its own dangers, of course. Even werewolves who visit the city only on surgical strikes have to be exceptionally careful about not endangering the Veil while they're there. There are plenty of rural back roads and patches of forest where a person can run for half a mile in wolf form without causing a stir; it's much harder to travel in Lupus for as much as a block in the heart of a city. People report "wild dogs" to animal control, and it's harder to find a place to refresh Gnosis. But perhaps worst of all are the crowds—with so many people jostling in and out of a werewolf's personal space, so many cars and noises and stenches, any Garou with a hair trigger is going to go off sooner or later. The city is no place to succumb to one's Rage, but it isn't easy finding an environment where it's harder to maintain control.

Book of the City is designed to help players and Storytellers get a better feel for the city not as it would appear to the ordinary person, but as it would appear to Garou. Rather than focus on elements of urban life that are already obvious, this book takes a look at cities from the animistic perspective, exploring what they are, the effects they have on the spirit world, and the dangers they pose to the Garou. It's our hope that with this book in hand, players and Storytellers alike will be filled with new ideas for urban stories and chronicles.

Legends of the Garou: Just Another Good Stop shows what happens when a pack used to rural and wilderness life is forced by necessity to enter the city, and the troubles and opportunities they find there.

Chapter One: Writing on the Wall begins the book proper with a look at the cosmology of cities in the world of **Werewolf**—how they began, how they have developed in the spirit world, and what sort of greater purpose they might play in the vast struggle between Gaia and the Triat. This chapter focuses less on the hard facts of urban animism, and more on the potential spiritual aspects of the city, each one a potential direction for a Storyteller to take a chronicle.

Chapter Two: The Grind presents the nitty-gritty details of potential threats Garou may have to face in the city, from mundane dangers like the media and animal control to supernatural threats that are unlike any to be found in the wilderness.

Chapter Three: The Neon Web goes into greater detail about the actual urban Umbra—its layout, its denizens, and what Garou might expect from the place. Also included are several handy tips for survival in the Scabs that no pack should be without.

Chapter Four: Urban Legends is devoted to the Storyteller, providing advice on how to select, modify

and elaborate on the urban setting, whether for a short story or an extended chronicle.

Finally, the **Appendix: Riot Gear** features a collection of Gifts, rites, totems, fetishes and other resources aimed at helping Garou survive the urban jungle—or helping their enemies make life even more difficult for them.

Sources

Although you don't really need anything but the **Werewolf** main rulebook to run an urban chronicle, there are plenty of other sourcebooks that can help add some meat to your stories. For **Werewolf**, **Book of the Weaver** and **Umbra** provide additional assistance with the spirit aspect of the city, while **Ratkin** and **Ananasi** can provide some antagonists with a decidedly urban feel. The various citybooks for **Vampire** (such as **New York by Night**), while very **Vampire**-centric, do offer a certain amount of structural information on city chronicles (and, of course, more antagonists). We reference plenty of other White Wolf books throughout the course of **Book of the City**, but don't be intimidated; you don't need them. They just have extra stuff that you *can* use, not that you *must* use.

Obviously, there's plenty of television and movies dedicated to stories of various cities. For the purposes of the World of Darkness, you probably want to avoid the loving odes (like Woody Allen movies) and go more for the gritty dramas—*New Jack City* is more appropriate than *Manhattan Murder Mystery*, at least from a **Werewolf** perspective. Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* is really a must-see; the mood matches the Umbrascape of the urban World of Darkness very nicely.

In the same vein, *Law and Order*, *NYPD Blue* or *The Sopranos* are likely to be far more helpful than *ER*, which is in turn head and shoulders above pretty much any city-based sitcom ever.

On the fiction side of things, there are city-based novels and short stories to fit any taste, from noir to high-tech espionage and crime novels. Just pick a section of library and look around; enough writers have tackled the topic of how to depict the texture of a city that you'll find something useful. Urban fantasies like Neil Gaiman's *Neverwhere* and China Mieville's *King Rat* can provide particular ideas for various supernatural influences, be they unusual spirits, totems, or even something entirely different.

Even comic books have something to offer. Grant Morrison's *The Invisibles* hits heavily on the themes of urban shamanism, sacred geometries and other eminently usable topics. Warren Ellis' *Transmetropolitan* is satirical, but full of ideas. Alan Moore and Eddie

Campbell's *From Hell* is primarily a Jack the Ripper story, but also delves into the mystic geography of London in a way that's sure to promote ideas. (The movie adaptation is fine, but considerably less detailed for our purposes.) Will Eisner's *Dropsie Avenue* documents the rise and fall of a neighborhood, from rural lane to crumbling tenements — perfect background flavor for a city in the World of Darkness.

Internet

City homepages of all sorts are going to give you the brightest side of the city in question; after all, tourism is big business, and they don't want to scare away a visitor's dollars. However, although not ideal for plot hooks to drive a story, they can prove very useful for backdrops to set a scene. Have the pack meet

an ally or contact at one of the recommended restaurants, or at a park or other landmark. Use the schedule of festivals or other activities to play up the dynamic nature of the city. Background color adds a lot to a story with relatively little work, and a city's homepage can lighten the load further.

Urban Legends Reference Pages (<http://www.snopes.com/>) — This extensive website chronicles, categorizes, and debunks scores if not hundreds of urban legends. While the urban legends themselves are 90% bunk, tales of mysterious strangers and random chemicals introduced into everyday products make fantastic inspiration for urban *Werewolf* stories. And frankly, in the World of Darkness, wouldn't it be more interesting if many were *true*?



Chapter One: Writing on the Wall

"Our world is sick, boy. Very sick. A virus got in a long time ago and we've got so used to its effects we've forgotten what it was like before we became ill. I'm talking about cities, see?"

— Grant Morrison, *The Invisibles*

Urban Animism

Everything in the world of Werewolf has the potential to be reflected in the spirit world. There are animal-spirits to counter animals, plant-spirits to echo plants, and even Penumbral reflections of important structures or objects. A mountain in the physical world will have an Umbral counterpart just on the other side of the mirror. Of course the same is true of cities.

But cities aren't mountains, or animals, or plants — they're something very different. And they seem to play by different rules than the rest of the world. Giant heaps of Umbral webbing stretch across the

terrain, but only a few buildings or landmarks actually appear in the Penumbra with any identity of their own. The Weaver is strong throughout the Penumbral city, but so too is the Wyrm — and even the Wyld has its own strongpoints in the heart of the greatest cities. The spirit reflection of a city is the most dramatic section of the Penumbra to be found — and yet it's unlike anything seen in the Penumbra before the Industrial Revolution. The city is a strange tangle of spiritual contradictions, a morass of concepts both Gaian and alien.

Why? How did it come to be this way?

The Garou Perspective

The Garou are notorious for disliking the urban environment; they even call those of their own who live there "urrah," a term that also means "tainted ones." The stereotype is that they're primitives, hairy Luddites who don't understand technology and therefore consider it evil. Anything manmade is "unnatural" to them, and therefore cities are the most unnatural things you can find (being the largest concentrations of manmade things). Like most gross oversimplifications, this stereotype falls short of the truth.

Most werewolves, even Glass Walkers and Bone Gnawers, can't help feeling at least somewhat uncomfortable in the urban environment. The same holds true for most shapeshifters. Their animal senses revolt against the noise and stink; their Rage bubbles to the surface every time someone invades their personal space. The urrah have learned to deal with these problems somewhat better than their wilder cousins have, but it's still difficult for any Glass Walker who hasn't lost the wolf to ride in a crowded elevator or deal with rush hour traffic without breaking a sweat (or something or someone else). The press of humanity just doesn't feel right to a shapeshifter, any more than it would to a wild animal; the pheromones alone are enough to drive one crazy. Add to this the fact that the spirits of the Weaver and Wyrm flourish in cities, and you begin to see why the werewolf dislike of urban areas is somewhat more than simple technoshock.

The Garou are prone to calling cities "scabs," of course. The default connotation is that a scab is something that erupts over a wound — ugly, scarring, and a sign that something is wrong. The Earth is wounded in the places where cities form, slashed open and built over by slabs of metal and concrete and glass. Some Garou take the more optimistic outlook, however; they point out that a scab is a self-forming bandage, an ugly device that will peel away when the wound is healed. The cities are places where art and culture and learning can flourish, and once humans have learned to live more peaceably with one another, the cities can peel away in turn, the humans no longer needing them so drastically. The analogy is not a popular one, however; after all, the cities show no sign of peeling away and revealing a healed land in the immediate future, and the immediate future may be the only future left.

To some modern Theurges, the city is "the Snare." The term seems to have arisen not as a reference to a trap laid for the Garou — after all, the bait is largely unappealing, at least to most of the tribes. Rather, the tangled mess of Weaver-webs and Wyrm-spirits that spreads through the urban Penumbra seems to be a spiritual echo of the original snare that caught the Wyrm. The struggles between the Designer and the Corrupter reverberate across the face of Gaia like ripples caused by falling rain, and cities spring up in their wake, each one a reflection of the battle that took the universe out of balance. The analogy is more symbolic than anything else — but symbolism has a solidity all its own in the spirit world.

The so-called urrah don't use such derogatory terms quite as often, as one might expect. To the average Glass Walker or Bone Gnawer, the city is simply the City, almost the way one might say "the President" or "the Pope." Each city is unique, but they're all reflections cast by a single ideal, much in the same way that all bear-spirits are reflections of Great Bear. Oddly enough, while urban Garou are remarkably territorial and defensive of the city they live in, they don't tend to express their loyalty in quite the same regional terms. The Bone Gnawers of NYC's Sept of the Green never call themselves "New Yorkers" — the city they live in is a vast spirit entity, a source of danger and opportunity, but it doesn't define them. They don't belong to it, not like humans seem to want to.

But each of these factions sees cities in much the same light — as organic spirit entities, more than simply a collection of individual territories. A multitude of human writers have talked about cities as living things with personalities of their own; the Garou don't see that as a metaphor, but as a simple fact. A city — the City — is more than the sum of its parts. It may be an enemy and an ally at the same time. But it is alive in a spiritual sense, and in many ways more alive than any mountain or river stands a chance of being.

And if cities are living, pseudo-sentient spirit entities in their own right — what does that mean for the world?

The History of the City

Any fool can read a history book and call it facts. And sure, maybe they are factual. Never mind the sheer number of revisionist historians that have quietly

Warning: Uncertainty Ahead

In all fairness, we should warn the reader that this chapter is going to be vague and contradictory, for the most part — perhaps frustratingly so for those who prefer the thought that there is One Greater Truth to the World of Darkness, revealed piece by piece with each new supplement. Here we ask questions and provide answers — but more answers than can actually be true. This is deliberate.

This chapter explores the cosmological existence of the cities of the World of Darkness, looking at them as something more than simple settlement patterns or facts of human society. But rather than actually lay out The Truth, here we explore potential truths — possible secrets of the workings of the World of Darkness that may inspire a few unusual twists in your chronicles. Any one of these theories or potential spin-off directions is as valid as any other; we'd rather that players and Storytellers read this book and come away with a dozen brand-new ideas just waiting to be fleshed out than only one fully-formed idea that has to be ignored or used as is. We would also rather present enough options so that when a Storyteller decides what the *real* truth about the spirit nature of cities and civilization is, players can't second-guess her by reading a supplement.

We apologize in advance to those readers who find all this vague obfuscation irritating. But we're going to do it anyway.

ignored the findings that undercut their own personal beliefs, or the idiots who mistook propaganda for accurate news reporting. Or the inaccurate translations — like Cinderella in glass slippers or Moses parting the Red Sea. (The slipper was fur, and the sea was “the reed sea,” for those playing at home.) But sure, you can find the latest theories about how things “really were” in a history book, and you can read about the rise and fall of empires and all that crap to your heart’s content.

But that’s only the half of the picture that the humans are allowed to see. And Galliards have access to a different set of stories — ones that tell the other side. And our set of stories might be just as full of errors as the humans’ history, sure.

Then again, it might not. You have to judge for yourself.

The First City

It all began with the Impergium. You see, way back when, our ancestors took a good long look at humanity and saw that there was something nesting in humans, something waiting to be born when the clever little apes reached a certain point. Our ancestors didn’t know what that something was, but they had a feeling it couldn’t be good. So they began the night-fear — the killing of humans whenever they had a few too many families huddled around their communal fires, or a few too many tents in their settlements.

Somewhere along the line, though, the People got soft. They thought that whatever it was inside humans, it couldn’t be so bad that it was worth the mass murder. So they slacked off, and they let the humans grow as much as they wanted, and they smacked around any Garou or Fera who were still interested in keeping this unborn thing unborn. And when the humans were numerous enough, they gave birth to the first cities — and these cities impregnated new settlers, who went out and bore new cities in new lands. Some of us thought it was all very exciting at the time, but others started to worry.

Now look at where we are. Humans have created millennia worth of art and culture and all kinds of wonders. Most say they want peace, although they tend to act differently. But probably half the planet is covered in cities, either full-grown, adolescent or even children, and they’re all connected by roads and ferries and electric communication. Wait long enough, and some pregnant humans will give birth to cities on the face of Luna herself. You tell me — should the killing have stopped?

— Stephan Longknife, Silver Fang Galliard

Where the First City was, or what people called it, is irrelevant to the Garou Nation. Archaeologists argue over names like Catal Huyuk, Jericho and Ur — to the Garou, and to most shapeshifters for that matter, the only title that matters is the First City. It was the first place the humans built after the Impergium, and it was the Garou’s first glimpse at what humanity might someday become.

Nobody really knows what the Umbrascape was like in the First City; the legends don’t preserve an accurate account, likely because the werewolves who went there thought that all cities would be like the First City, from that point until the end of time. Some history-minded Garou argue that the First City certainly didn’t have a City Father — while others say it had to, being the forefather of all cities everywhere. A few Theurges and Galliards have

actually gone on deep Umbral quests to search out the First City Father; none have yet met with any success.

The First City is popularly held to have been destroyed by outside forces, most likely angry werewolves. Some legends hold that the First City was offensive to Garou who saw an unwholesome trend in the new Weaver-patterns forming. Others say that the Wyrm crept into the heart of the city, and that the destruction was the first and last time the Garou ever tore apart an entire city to root out the Enemy's spawn. Whatever the reason, it wasn't so horrible that the Garou prevented other cities from arising later on. Perhaps the sentiment was that humans would do a better job with the other cities; perhaps the Garou had other affairs to attend to at the time (as the end of the Impergium is sometimes stated to coincide with the beginning of the War of Rage). At any rate, the proverbial genie was out of his bottle.

The New Enemy

There were no vampires in the world before there were cities. There were things that hunted in the night, yes; and there were things that drank blood. But they did not wear human forms, and they were not corpses that lived. The human race had to reach its first true milestone before it could birth its first true monster.

The Silver Record tells the tale of the Bloody Man, the would-be immortal who became slave to both Weaver and Wyrm and accursed by both Gaia and Helios. Our own tales say that the Bloody Man was born to parents who lived within the walls of the First City, and that it was only there that he could find enough food to sate him. If he had been born in the wilderness, perhaps he would have been a predator like any other — but he grew fat on the blood of humans because they were so easy to find in the City, and soon he would drink the blood of no other animal. All his children are the same; the Weaver is in them so strongly that they cannot leave the city for long without falling prey to the curses laid on their ancestor. The good lands will not have them.

— Amy Hundred Voices, Uktena Galliard.

Were there vampires before there were cities? The actual truth is unknown. Garou legend tends to believe otherwise, but some facts are indubitably lost along the generations of oral history. But no matter their origin, vampires have always been inexorably tied to the cities — they are the only places where they can hunt their favored prey and hide among the herd.

Many Garou believe Leeches to be a creation of mad Weaver and hateful Wyrm, a form of "life" with the strength of both its parents but the eternal curse of being severed from Gaia and despised by Helios. But some Theurges theorize that vampires are a specialized breed of fomor or other Wyrm-creature, specially adapted to infiltrate the Weaver's own strongholds. There, these Theurges say, the vampires can master the cities and in time reconfigure them in order to cut the strands of the Web and free their dark father. Younger vampires seem to have no real knowledge of either Weaver or Wyrm, and in fact are barred from entering the spirit world — but if they are merely imperfect copies of their elders, then the *true* vampire lords may indeed be puppet masters playing the Weaver and its human servants up until the point that they will reveal their true allegiance.

It's something of a paranoid theory, true. But it's no less plausible than any of the wild stories the vampires have been known to put forth about their own origins.

The Cities Grow

You should remember one thing about the City that the Nation does not. Now, this is hard for us to remember, to put together in our minds. But the City has been a very minor part of human existence for all but the last hundred and fifty years. The number of humans who lived in tribes, in villages, in farmsteads, was always much greater than the number who lived in huge metropoli. "Rome" we call the empire the Leeches sucked dry, millennia ago, but Rome was only six hundred thousand people out of the Empire's seventy-five million. Old Testament Jerusalem? Maybe five thousand people, on five or ten acres of the Temple Mount, that's all; the water supply simply allowed no more. Yes, Athens was fifty thousand citizens, but that's not that many humans.

The City has historically been small. The wild and the half-wild of farm and pasture has been much more powerful, and the Iron Riders, the Warders, the Glass Walkers, the city-Garou, have been a very small and weak tribe. That's just all there is to it. The first nation in the world, ever, to have a majority of its population living in urban areas was England at the turn of the twentieth century. And that was possible only because a world Empire fed and clothed the British. Barely one long Garou lifetime ago, the rural and the wild held the majority of humans; the change has been so swift that it's barely comprehensible. And what farm and pasture

is left is chemically poisoned and Wyld-lost. No wonder Phoenix's prophecy came when it did.

The Nation does not remember this because Garou, rightly speaking, don't have history. We have legend, tales, rumors, bad jokes, but not, among the warriors of Gaia, a systematic analysis of records for the purpose of showing change over time. We tell; we don't, as a people, sift through what we tell for understanding. I'm a historian, but I'm also Kinfolk, not Garou. Thank Gaia.

How can we use this reality, then? I wonder if the Glass Walkers aren't right: the City is the new earth, the new Gaia, and we must adapt to it as we adapted, eons ago, to the Ice. I don't know. But know that the dying, city-wrecked Earth of the prophecy isn't how Gaia always was. And I'm sure it isn't how She will always be.

— Dr. Steven Stirling, Children of Gaia Kinfolk

Humans did get better and better at building cities, much to the chagrin of the Garou (and, to be honest, many other Changing Breeds). As they did so, they began giving the Weaver the first real boost in influence over the Penumbra. The Weaver had always been strong, of course — she had managed to bind the Wyrm according to most Garou legends, after all. But now she had a new source of strength, one that converted sections of the Penumbra over to her domain. And what was particularly disturbing to the Garou was that the Webs were now appearing with predictable regularity. A city could coat a section of Penumbra with webbing far more reliably than a battlefield could open a Blight. It was a troubling prospect, but even at their greatest, a city could only reach so far. The deep woods and valleys were still safe, and so the Garou held to their promise not to reinstate the Impergium.

Somewhere along the line, though, the city took on a new aspect — the stronghold of the enemy. In the first small settlements, there wasn't really anywhere to hide from the Garou. One werewolf with the ability to scent out Wyrm-taint could patrol an entire city on a regular basis, keeping it mostly clear from intrusion. But once cities reached a certain size — probably once large and crowded enough to discourage werewolves from casually wandering through — they offered new hiding places for the servants of the Wyrm.

The Nile Valley was probably the place where werewolves began their unending war against the vampires. Here the cities had grown large enough to support multiple vampires, and the Leeches wasted

no time in building up a power base. The Silent Striders were the first Garou to struggle against vampires, and ultimately they lost, banished by a ritual of great power enacted by the vampiric high priest of the Wyrm as Apophis. Soon afterward, the other tribes would find themselves dragged into a similar war, when they first clashed with the vampires of Rome.

Where cities grow, the Wyrm grows. There is no exception; there never has been. In Europe, the Wyrm lay in cities like Rome and Carthage, and drove kings to make war on one another. In the Pure Lands, the city-builders opened their arms to the Wyrm, and he greedily ate the sacrifices they offered him. In Asia, the shapeshifters watched the humans build great civilizations on bricks mortared with blood and powdered bone. Is there any land where the cities did not offer the Wyrm shelter and food for himself and his children? No. There is none. I cannot say why it is, only that it is and it always has been.

— No-Joy, Uktena Theurge

The Industrial Revolution

There are no words for how the rise of the cities caught us by surprise. You can't understand. For millennia, we'd been working and preparing for the Apocalypse. We all knew the Signs by heart. But here, all of a sudden, the world was changing so quickly that we don't even remember when the Revolution started. While we were still coming to grips with the new patterns of civilization — the new strength of the City — it all exploded out from under us. The second Sign was upon us before we'd really taken stock and realized that the first Sign was coming to pass.

One hundred years. From the first Sign of the Prophecy of the Phoenix to the sixth in a hundred years. Of course we weren't ready. Who could have been?

— Yossaly Rage-Bound, Silver Fang Theurge

Even in the modern age of telecommunication and space flight, Garou still remember the Industrial Revolution as the time when everything *really* changed. The spiritscape itself changed then, when the first factories opened and the humans began to flood into the cities in earnest. It was the first time anyone had ever seen Webs on that scale, and certainly the first time anyone had ever seen truly immense Weaver spiders. During the Industrial Revolution, City Fathers and Mothers became more than a strange rumor — they became recognizable, established figures in Garou spirit lore.

It's entirely possible that the definition of the city changed completely during the Industrial Revolution — at least in a spiritual sense. Just as the totem Mammoth was once the symbol of strength and is now a symbol of extinction, spirit nature can change. Before the Industrial Revolution, there were a couple of handfuls at best of different Weaver-spiders; today, the wisest Glass Walker Theurges with the most cutting-edge fetish laptops despair of cataloging them all. When the spirits of steam and electricity and glass and concrete came to prominence, what sort of spirits did they displace? If the City Mothers and Fathers are now the voices of the cities, what came before?

The Industrial Revolution was also a very good time for the Wyrm. The atrocious working conditions in various mines, factories and slaughterhouses are all well-documented, and need little elaboration here (although for the interested, Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* is an interesting look into the mentality of some workers of the time, as well as an infamous portrait of said working conditions). The lot of the child laborer is probably most symbolic of the new sorts of suffering that industry brought,

although it'd be a shame to overlook the sorts of things that adults also were forced to do to get by. Eventually, various reforms managed to scale back the worst excesses (although they were slightly less successful in the World of Darkness), but the damage was done — the Wyrm had dug into the cities, and it hasn't been uprooted since.

The Sprawl

Human tales of Apocalypse always mention a plain as the location where the Final Battle will take place. Maybe it's the plain of Megiddo; maybe it's Vigard Plain, the field of Ragnarok. You can hardly blame them; after all, for ages their idea of warfare has been armies massing on huge plains, and only recently have they seriously experimented with the formula. But I see things differently. The plain of the Final Battle won't be a plain at all. It'll be the city. Which one? Any one. All of them. Maybe they'll all be linked at that time, and the battle will spill from Paris to Hong Kong to New York as easily as crossing streets. But it'll be the city, because that's where the armies are already massing.

They're already at each other's throats there. The Weaver, spinning its webs at an ever-increasing rate,



turns cities into ever-growing and consuming entities. The Wyrm eats out the heart of the cities, claiming them for itself, remolding them into sites of urban decay. The Weaver, in retaliation, forces the cities to grow even larger to become strong enough to keep the Wyrm suppressed. The cities spread and spread as the Weaver claims more territory and the Wyrm eats out a larger chunk at the heart of each one. It's like watching a disease spread, with blotches of rotten skin becoming so large they start to overlap. Maybe when they all link up to form a large enough "plain," that's when the Final Battle will begin. But it's far more likely that when that happens, the Final Battle will have been over and lost for a long time.

— Orson Half-foot, Black Fury Theurge

The modern cityscape is virtually unrecognizable from what it was a hundred and fifty, perhaps even a hundred years ago. People live and work together in almost inconceivable numbers (certainly to elder Garou). Relatively little needs to be said about the modern urban Umbrascape, at least in this chapter. It is, for better or worse, what most modern Garou are most familiar with; it may be the most hazardous that any cityscape has ever been, but at least modern werewolves know the basics of what to expect.

The main development in the modern cityscape worth considering is not how it came to be what it is, but where it might go next. The next evolution will almost certainly be based entirely on the shift from End Times to Apocalypse; if the Final Battle takes a form that might leave the cities standing, the ripples it causes will still change them forever. The Garou stand on the brink of the world changing forever, and the City will likely be the thing that hints at the new form the world will take — possibly in time for them to do something about it.

The Triatic Puff

Young cubs are taught early on that the city is the place where the Weaver is strongest, where she exercises her power to its fullest. It's a simple enough axiom, and one that gets the general idea across well enough. But, as with most things in the World of Darkness, reality is a little more complicated. Cities aren't the domain of the Weaver alone, and they're not as uncontested as one might think.

Each of the following sections is broken into two parts; the initial overview of just how the Triat influences the cities of the World of Darkness, and possibilities for taking that influence a step further.

Hopefully, you'll find some sort of interesting use for the possibilities listed, even as potential visions of what things might become if the characters don't take action.

The Weaver

In the Triatic struggle for humanity, the Weaver definitely has the upper hand where cities are concerned. Each new skyscraper, telephone line, traffic light or shopping mall reinforces the Pattern Web that much more. For millennia, Garou assumed that the Wyrm was the only enemy they'd been born to fight, the only threat they really had to worry about. It was the sight of the urban Penumbra that convinced most of them otherwise. Webs stretch for miles and miles, even scaling up into the sky as if trying to trap the moon and stars. Metallic and neon spiders scuttle from one node to another in numbers that the prophecies could only guess at. The city belongs to the Weaver.

Generally speaking, the more developed an area, the stronger it is in Weaver energies; a skyscraper will add to the Web much more than a corner gas station would. Of course, "more developed" doesn't necessarily mean "bigger buildings." The various "gated communities" and other housing developments where rows of identical houses or apartment buildings stand in orderly rows — those add extra pattern and conformity to the landscape, likewise strengthening the Weaver. The more control humans exert over the environment, the more the Weaver flourishes by the ordering and settling of unwanted irregularities.

Alternate Weaver Influence

In a world where the Weaver is even stronger than it is today, cities could become colossal nodes in its Web, spinning threads to connect with one another and cover the whole world. Development spins wildly out of control; a rural lane with farmhouses on hundred-acre lots becomes a suburb in as little as a year, and is properly urban within a decade. City Fathers and Mothers cease to exist as individual entities, and become more propaganda figureheads — mouthpieces for the Designer, like newscasters with a "friendly face." The urban Penumbra becomes a cyberpunk hell, all but impassable without exceptionally powerful Gifts and/or fetishes. In the physical world, crime rates drop and employment rates rise — more and more people are seamlessly incorporated into a productive, trouble-free lifestyle. The number of Drones expands expo-

nentially; "Weaver fomori" soon outnumber actual fomori. The wilderness is the only place the Weaver cannot reach, and werewolves find themselves trying to throw an asteroid-sized monkeywrench into the Web in order to "crash the system."

Conversely, if the Weaver's influence in cities is weaker, cities become much less predictable. The Gauntlet is lower, and spirits are freer to meddle in urban affairs. Many sites may wind up "haunted" by spirits of various sorts, benign or malevolent. This might lead to an urban environment where either the Wyld or Wyrm dominates, or to a more Gaian approach. Civilization becomes more eclectic, with museums and galleries haphazardly mixed in with tech labs and shopping centers. A city without a strong Weaver presence becomes something quite unlike any city we know; it's anyone's guess where that would end up.

The Wyrm

The Weaver may get the most out of the City, but the Wyrm runs a very close second. There's something about urban life that can truly bring out the worst in humanity — the lack of space, the competition for resources, the constant invasion of privacy. Although urban residents are in no way morally inferior to those that live beyond the city limits, there's certainly more frequent temptation and opportunity to give in and take out one's frustrations on someone else.

The crime statistics of a city give a very good impression of just how a city may feed the Wyrm. Each murder, each rape, each assault or carjacking or hit-and-run empowers more Banes, which in turn feed their newfound strength on up the hierarchy of the Wyrm. Although there are few cruelties that are particular only to city-dwellers, the denser concentration of people means more pain, violation, despair and suffering per square mile. Any given city will have a strong population of Banes, simply because it's easy for the Wyrm-spirits to find something to feed themselves.

Things get worse in a hot summer. Tempers are even more on edge, each casual violation of personal space becomes a deliberate insult, and the crime rate goes higher. As the planet gets warmer and warmer each year, the cities of the World of Darkness see more and more of these blistering days of mania, and the Wyrm fattens on the suffering that results.

(And you thought global warming didn't *really* help the Wyrm.)

It would be easy to say that the Wyrm is strongest in the worst neighborhoods — that Banes flock to crackhouses and projects over all else. But that's not particularly accurate. Crime flourishes at all levels of society — respected city officials may hire prostitutes, only to abuse and perhaps even kill them, secure in their belief that no reprisals will come. Subtle and powerful agents of the Wyrm circulate in all levels of society, feeding (and feeding on) the worst excesses of the poor, middle-class and rich alike. Some of them are vampires who don't even know what the Wyrm is, but find these methods exciting and profitable; others may be Enticers, Ferectoi or other fomori who are driven by instinct to promote much suffering and grief. The Wyrm can be *anywhere* in the city; it simply depends on where it finds opportunities.

Because of these multiple layers of taint, using Sense Wyrm in an urban environment can sometimes be considerably less than helpful. The Wyrm is everywhere to some extent; its aroma lingers wherever a Bane recently found humans doing something to its taste. A vampire whose rigid discipline allows him to suppress his taint to a faint aroma may appear no more "of the Wyrm" than the sorority girl strung out on a few choice Magadon pharmaceuticals. A clever Garou can still get accurate and helpful readings from Sense Wyrm — it just requires using one's brain as well as one's nose.

Alternate Wyrm Influence

If the Wyrm gains the upper hand in the urban environment, cities become horrible places to live. Urban decay grips the heart of the city, sending more and more people fleeing to the suburbs and beyond in hopes of finding a safe haven. Businesses leave and tourism drops; the cities become more impoverished each year, and have less to spend on law enforcement and civic works. The world may drift farther away from a recognizable "like our own world, only darker" analogue, and more towards a sort of dystopia, even a spiritual post-apocalyptic setting.

Another possibility is a setting where the cities have evolved as an ambitious method of serving — or freeing — the Wyrm. Civic planners and architects are influenced by secretive, corrupt brotherhoods to align their plans to match certain Pretanic sigils or unusual flows of energy. Peculiar symbols are cut into the cornerstones of significant buildings, and unusual materials are added to the design of the highest skyscrapers. Even the street maps may

hold clues to the greater patterns and summoning circles they invoke. It's all part of a grand design handed down for millennia that will, when the time is right, flood with energy and tear the Web asunder, freeing the Wyrm to remake the world. In such a chronicle, the Garou might find themselves playing with sacred geometries and geomancies of their own, trying to reconfigure the patterns into something that will keep the Wyrm bound (or even heal it). A concept like this needn't even be approached on the grandest scale — perhaps only one city, the chronicle's home, has these layers of occult design hidden beneath its surface.

The Wyld

Even though the Weaver and Wyrm are so strong in the urban environment, they are neither omnipresent nor invincible. The Wyld is not the wilderness — wherever there is the potential for change or growth, a seed of the Wyld is planted. And if carefully tended, each seed can grow. The Wyld is present wherever things go strange and unpredictable, but not in ways that feed the Wyrm. The Wyld is random blackouts and unexplainable accidents. It manifests in peculiar animals that have made remarkable adaptations to urban life, and in plants that grow in places where they should logically be dead. It is strongest in the places where few people go, where unexpected things happen. A small side-tunnel off a subway might lead to a shadowy, strange nexus of Wyld energy, as might a disused sewer pipe. It is the constant potential — or threat — of rules breaking down, of things not happening as they should. In the cities of the World of Darkness, it is invaluable.

The Bone Gnawers and Ratkin are the foremost allies the Wyld has in the urban environment — particularly the Ratkin. Neither is a friend of the Weaver, and both groups do what they can to shake up the Weaver's power within city limits. The Ratkin are probably the closest thing the Wyld has to mortal or shapeshifter servants; they see unmitigated Wyld chaos as the antidote to both Weaver and Wyrm, the shot in the arm the world needs to survive. They revere the Wyld for what they see it as — the weapon they need to set things right. But as always, the Wyld has no real friends. It cannot maintain them; it does not think on a scale that includes concepts like compassion or camaraderie.

Alternate Wyld Influence

The obvious result of the Wyld becoming stronger in cities is that the cities would break down and,

well, stop being cities. There are a few other ways to handle this, however.

Perhaps a strong Wyld presence in cities wouldn't technically disrupt the order and patterns of life as such, at least not on the surface. The cities appear to play by all the usual rules, ordered into neat blocks and streets and the like. However, the orderly façade is all an illusion. On the other side of the Gauntlet is a consistently shifting parody of the city, a Penumbra where gates to various Near Realms open and close at will. The Gauntlet randomly fluctuates, particularly at night, and lone stragglers might find themselves in a nightmarish parody of the city they thought they knew. Most people ignore the rumors of strange happenings, but the Wyld reaches its tendrils into the minds of the barely sane, who become its prophets. Homeless lunatics babbling on street corners are not witless madmen, but rather the only humans who have glimpsed the truth at the heart of the city.

The City as Organism

The analogy of the city as a living organism is a popular one, and in the world of *Werewolf*, it doesn't have to be a simple analogy. In fact, some quick brainstorming can raise even more questions to add onto this theory, allowing the Storyteller to build an urban cosmology particular to her campaign.

Is the city a viral or parasitic organism? That would seem to be the most obvious choice, and it would be very much in keeping with the Garou's beliefs. If such is the case, then cities are clearly feeding off Gaia while giving nothing back. This aspect would also indicate that cities are fully capable of killing their host — and if so, what happens to them? Do they have a plan for spreading to new hosts? Can they evolve into a more symbiotic relationship with their host?

Is the city a predator? If so, what does it prey upon? It may be a hostile pseudo-intelligence that feasts on the spirits of mountains, rivers or plains. Perhaps New Orleans was a spirit predator that caught the Mississippi Delta for its prey, and now slowly devours its catch alive.

Is the city a prey animal? If so, what could feed on it? Are there greater spirits out there that feed on the spirits of cities and take over their territories? This premise could lead to a terrifying chronicle, as the players become slowly aware of immense spirit entities that devour and replace the City Fathers, going on to eat all the life or spirit out of a city and

leave a husk behind — or to rebuild the cities in their own image. Such city-eaters could easily be Wyrmish in origin, but what if they're Weaver-spirits that turn cities into sterile parodies of their former selves? Are these predators something that the Garou should fight, or do they represent a potential return to Balance?

Is the city a hive mind? Does it have a multitude of sub-intelligences that form a single vast entity? If so, what qualifies a spirit to be part of the hive mind? Is a hive-mind city part of the greater Weaver-mind, or is it a wholly separate entity born of parallel evolution? What if a city is a lesser copy of the Weaver, something created to someday grow and replace the Weaver when it dies; is the Earth essentially the Weaver's egg-sac? (The Ananasi believe that their progenitor Queen Ananasa was designed as a "backup copy of the Weaver"; such a premise might imply that she is not only that, but possibly the City Mother of the First City as well.)

And if the city is an organism, did it evolve — or was it born of some other organism? The latter possibility suggests some strange ideas. Perhaps cities were born from the Weaver herself, laid as spirit eggs in places of power or in the minds of humans. Or perhaps they're the fleshly children of an Umbral Realm that impregnated the physical world before the Sundering. Perhaps the CyberRealm isn't as new as the Garou believe — maybe it was a possibility that only showed itself when the Earth cities began to catch up to its shining streets and tangled lines. It could easily be an eternal Father-of-Cities, perhaps itself born ages ago, cut loose from a world that



A Question of Scale

All this talk of sentient cities devouring and being devoured may seem a bit over-the-top. After all, cities don't really move around, and they take a long time to die. But remember that even the city-as-organism isn't going to operate on a scale that's familiar to humans (or werewolves). If a city's spirit is killed or devoured, the physical city might take a generation or so to die. Think of the cities of the Midwestern Rust Belt, or the failing industry towns of England. Once the spirit is gone, the body may twitch and die for some time before it's utterly lifeless, and even then people might still live there. It won't be a happy existence, but that's the World of Darkness for you.

underwent its own Apocalypse before Gaia gave birth to the Earth.

The Human Element

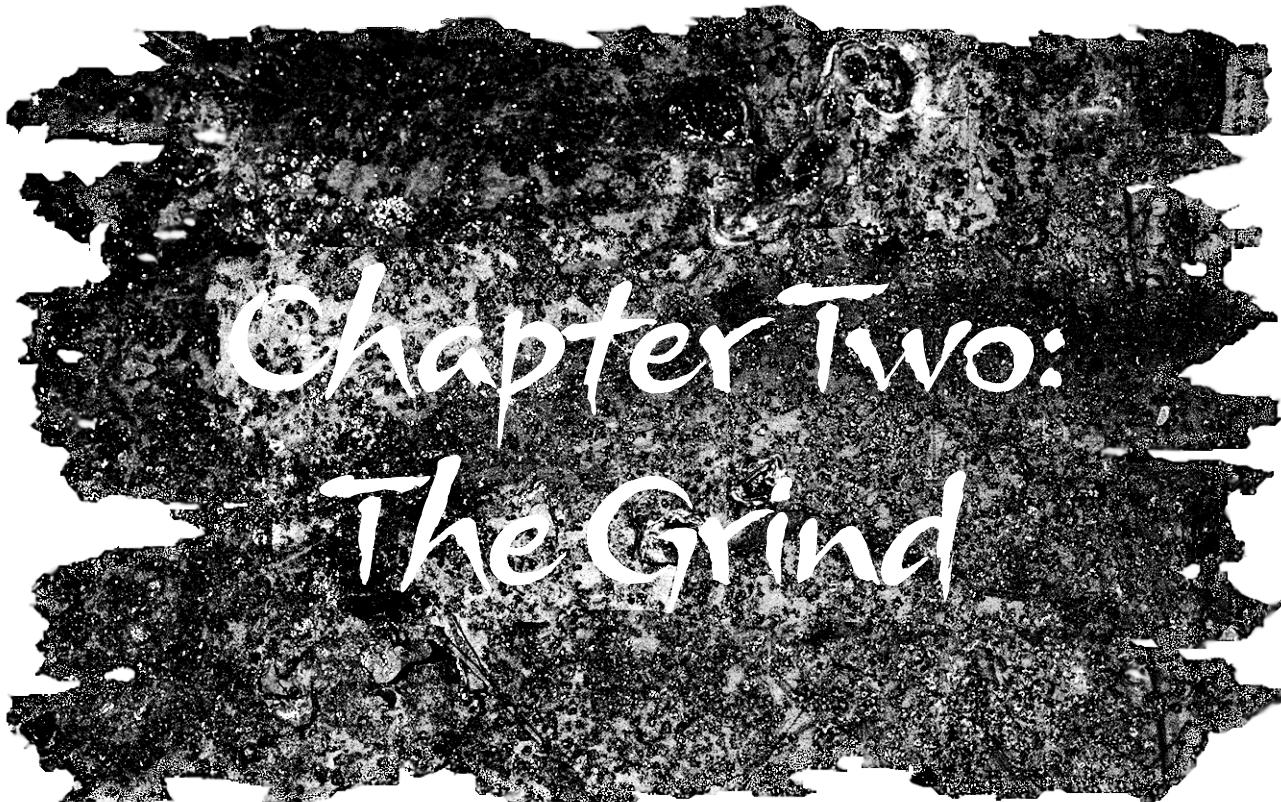
After all this talk of cities as strange and unknowable alien entities with a life of their own, we finally come to the simplest possibility — that cities are simply an outgrowth of the human spirit, taking on the spirit characteristics they do because that's what humanity has given them. Such a premise doesn't really lend itself to too many monolithic Umbral conspiracies or plots, but it has the simple ring of familiarity. This setting may be the favored default for Storytellers who would rather keep the backdrop fairly straightforward and focus on the characters' more personal struggles.

Such a premise will inevitably be colored at least to some extent by the Storyteller's and players' own viewpoints on the human condition. A misanthropic Storyteller who doesn't own a TV or set foot in fast food restaurants will probably emphasize the nasty spirit nature of the city as something that humans brought on themselves with their own wretched behavior. A more lenient and optimistic Storyteller might choose to play up the influence of the Wyrm or Weaver, reasoning that the World of Darkness is darker than our own world precisely because such entities are in it. As a result, there's little enough we can say to prepare the reader for a game set under this premise; you know your group better than we do.

But even the most misanthropic or forgiving Storytellers should be aware that even in the best and worst of times, people demonstrate remarkable capacity for compassion and cruelty alike. If you're intending to run a story around the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Center and Pentagon (which is your prerogative; just keep your players' sensibilities in mind), remember that on a day where we saw humans at their absolute worst, we also saw them at their absolute best. There's no reason to attribute humanity's worst excesses or greatest triumphs to outside supernatural forces, when our own world makes it evident that it just isn't the case in real life.

So the human route may be the most realistic, and it may offer the most potential rewards; it all depends on what you prefer. If this is the true nature of the city, then the hope for the urban environment — for all of Gaia — rests squarely on the shoulders of humanity. We leave it to you to decide whether this is cause for hope or despair.





Chapter Two: The Grind

"It's a jungle out there, huh?"

— Detective Briscoe, *Law and Order*

Please excuse me while I take out a metaphor and proceed to beat it to death. The City (my city, your city, any city) is alive. The Talons may call the "scabs" a disease eating Mother Gaia's flesh, but diseases are alive too. Me, I call them what we've got, so wishing things to be different doesn't do you squat. If we're going to win this war, we had better start dealing with the here and now and stop carping about the crap that went down thousands of years ago. But that's just my opinion, and I'm not here to teach Philosophy 101.

So, if a city is alive, Garou are the infection. Even we Glass Walkers pose as much a threat to the City as a lupus who sniffs people's asses when he's in human form. We Walkers (and the Gnawers) just blend better. And that's what you idiots have to do. Don't run around in tribal gear. Don't try to hide your klaive or labrys or whatever the hell else under your trenchcoat. Don't think that human laws don't apply to us just because we're not human. Act like an idiot and you'll end up on

a slab as fast as those poncey vampires that dress like low-rent Lestats. Blend. Drive the speed limit. Don't get noticed. Pay your goddamn taxes. Do you know how many times idiot Garou threatened the Veil by not declaring on their 1040's?

If you try to hurt a city, it will fight back. And unless you can't count, we're outnumbered millions to one. It's got cops (city, country, state and the feds). It's got the media. It's got, Gaia help you, Animal Control. Most importantly, it's got millions of people who will assume that, just because you torched a plant that provides them with jobs, food, shelter and health care, that you must be the enemy. And let's not forget that everyone these days is checking over their shoulder and opening letters with gloves on. People are scared shitless these days, and it only takes a spark to turn the PTA into a lynch mob.

— Phreak, metis Glass Walker Theurge

Garou, by their very nature, are creatures of the wild. While many of them were raised in human society (at least up until their First Change), they still have the instinctual responses of their wolf side. For many, the complex interweaving of human influences is unfathomable, when compared with the strict hierarchy of a pack. Add to that the changes caused by the supernatural forces that call the city "home," and you have a difficult territory in which Garou are forced to do battle. While Glass Walkers and Bone Gnawers claim cities as their protectorates, even they do not fully fit into the juxtaposition of Wyrm and Weaver that makes up the cities of the World of Darkness.

A Litany of Glass and Steel

Though different in many ways, the city-dwelling tribes have taken the ancient writ of the Litany, and adapted it to the modern era. They don't so much replace the tenets outright — they have enough trouble with the "urrah" label already — as elaborate on them in specific ways. The following expanded tenets are by no means universal among urban Garou, but they do exemplify the sort of added concerns that life in the city poses.

Garou Shall Not Mate With Garou: Treasure and Protect Your Kin

Many city-dwelling Garou tend to keep their Kinfolk more in the know than some of the other tribes. While some tribes believe that this poses a security risk, the Kinfolk supply many valuable services to their shapeshifting cousins. They provide an unmatched level of legwork, espionage and support. In addition to the traditional roles of Kinfolk, Glass Walker Kin manage firms, provide surveillance of suspected Wyrm agents, serve as legal representation, and even update hardware and software (few creatures with Rage are suited to tech support). Bone Gnawer Kin, on the other hand, expand the already large network of information and support to their "cousins." Many Kin of both tribes are trained in how to fight other supernatural creatures (vampires, zombies, ghosts), both as a measure of self-defense and, when needed, providing tactical support in large-scale conflicts.

Combat the Wyrm Wherever It Dwells and Whenever It Breeds: Choose Your Battles, Don't Let Them Choose You

A common mistake for wild Garou is to simple enter a town and repeatedly use the Gift Sense Wyrm until they find something to rend. That sort

of "Red Talon thinking" does not work over the long term, especially in areas where there are far too many agents of the Wyrm to simply attack them all by the light of a blood red moon. As a result, city-dwelling Garou have a "threat selection hierarchy" (or "get those bastards first" list). While active threats to Caerns, the Veil, Kinfolk or other important resources bump "lesser" targets up on the list, this is generally used for allocating strained resources. Sometimes, Kinfolk "vigilantes" volunteer to handle the lesser of multiple evils.

While each sept or pack may have a different ranking, the overall split divides enemies into two categories: "active" and "passive" threats. Active threats are aware of the war of the Apocalypse, and actively fight for the Wyrm or Weaver. Active threats include foes such as Black Spiral Dancers, Pentex or Weaver-controlled corporations, Banes, Drones and fomori. Passive threats, while in opposition to the Garou and/or generally baneful to Gaia, are not actively trying to bring about the Apocalypse. They include threats like vampires, mages, zombies, ghosts, and mortal werewolf hunters (as well as many other monsters not directly associated with the Wyrm). That is not to say that Garou consider all vampires to be passive threats; many are in active service to the Wyrm in some incarnation or another (in particular, they seem to revere an unknown Wyrm-figure named "Cain"). But the majority of the undead don't know the Wyrm from a worm, and get confused when attacked by Garou in Crinos form. (Some mistakenly assume that "WORM" is some sort of werewolf war cry.)

Respect the Territory of Another: All Territories Border One Another

Some Garou coming to cities for the first time assume that, somewhere, hidden in the heart of a city is an Evil Overlord, who knows everything that happens, and pulls the strings of every aspect of life in their domain. Some suspect ancient vampires. Others see the hand of Pentex. Still others believe mages control reality. This is almost never the case. Cities, especially cities large enough to safely house a substantial supernatural population, are simply too large for any one being, however powerful, to control completely. Instead, city Garou see cities as a network (or web), with hundreds, if not thousands of nodes of power, each pulling the web in different directions. With that in mind, when investigating areas (such as a factory suspected of being a Pentex holding, or a

neighborhood preyed upon by Banes), they try to discover the different influences that apply to that locale, and not just any supernatural ones.

Accept an Honorable Surrender: Know When to Close Ranks

Urban Garou are just as fractious as their wild relatives, if not more so. In fact, with the extremely limited number of urban caerns available, individuals and packs alike often find themselves fighting each other for control of valuable territory. Bone Gnawers are less likely to go to war with other Gnawers packs than other tribes, but power-hungry Glass Walkers more than make up for that. With that in mind, the Garou of a city stop their conflicts in mid-claw, close ranks, and unite to stop a common foe. The spiritual resources in cities are too precious to fall due to internal fighting. That is not to say that the warring factions will not immediately pick up where they left off when the battle ends, but they, more than country Garou with room to spread out, understand when inter-Garou fighting is unacceptable.

Submission to Those in Higher Station/The First Share of the Kill for the Greatest in Station: Rank Hath Its Privileges (or "the Trickle Down" Theory)

City Garou, more than their wild cousins, are more likely to have a "modern" upbringing, with un-wolf-like notions of democracy and such. This upbringing often conflicts with their inner nature. To help young Garou adjust to the changes, many urban septs try to give the young voices a place to be heard, while still maintaining discipline. Glass Walkers will often include lower ranking Garou in "brainstorming" sessions and include representatives of each pack at sept-wide meetings. Bone Gnawers, on the other hand, have "open mike night" at their septs, giving all members of the sept a chance to speak freely, without fear of retribution. Heckling, however, is encouraged.

Ye Shall Not Eat the Flesh of Humans: No Collateral Damage Whenever Possible

Country Garou often quote the old adage about omelets and eggs. However, in today's climate, urban Garou have found it more important than ever to keep their actions cloaked in secrecy. Additionally, urban Garou have grown to understand that only a tiny fraction of people working for Pentex subsidiaries (or even the core Pentex corporation) knows the true goals of their company. Even the security forces are largely kept in the dark. Few

Garou see glory in ripping the arms off of a minimum wage night watchman that's trying to feed his family. Old monkeywrencher tricks like setting fires or otherwise destroying Pentex property draws far too much attention in the post 9/11 climate. More stealthy methods are now in vogue, including computer sabotage, exposure to the media and even lawsuits. However, no one is going to call a consumer watchdog group to see the OSHA infractions at a fomori ranch. The old methods still have their place.

Respect Those Beneath Ye - All Are of Gaia: Don't Just Fight Evil, Do Good

Garou, by their very nature, are drawn to battle. In ancient times, their very reason for existing was to be the warriors of Gaia. However, times have changed and thanks to the War of Rage, the Garou shoulder many of the tasks once taken by other Changing Breeds. Many Glass Walkers and city-based Children of Gaia band together, not just to fight the forces of the Wyrm, but to improve things in the urban environment. Their message is catching on both with younger, idealistic Garou and battle-weary, older Garou. This faction, called "The Healing Heart," espouses the idea that Garou must not just fight the forces of Weaver and Wyrm, but encourage the healing of the victims. While some scoff at the idea of Gaia's Chosen Warriors doing "community service," places where Garou have worked to improve the area often show signs of spiritual regeneration.

The Veil Shall Not Be Lifted: THE VEIL SHALL NOT BE LIFTED

If there is one thing that Garou admire about the vampires, it is their success in hiding their weaknesses and powers with folklore and fiction. While the average person believes the myths that crosses repel vampires and wooden stakes kill them, everyone knows that silver kills werewolves. Although the Veil protects Garou from many forms of exposure, it would not take much to expose them to the light of media scrutiny. In the wilds, Garou actions can be blamed on natural predators. In the cities, there are no wild animals running loose, and every day new security cameras pop up. City Garou, more than ever, are having to remain in either Homid or Lupus forms, except when absolutely necessary. Fortunately, Theurges have certain fetishes useful in protecting the Veil, along with the growing popularity of Gifts like Jam Technology, Blissful Ignorance, Power Surge, and Control Complex Machine.

Do not Suffer Thy People to Tend Thy Sickness: They Also Serve

In ancient times, Garou too sick to serve as warriors often threw themselves into futile, suicidal battles or went off to the wilderness to die alone. In modern times, aging or ill Garou are finding new purposes, other than those of warrior. Many young Glass Walkers tend to downplay the advice of elders, feeling that if an elder can't swing a klaive or hack code with the best of them, that the old-fogies home is the only place for them. "Iron Rider" is just one particular putdown for aging Glass Walkers. Contrariwise, the Bone Gnawers embrace the wisdom of their elders. The eldest Gnawers often find themselves serving not just as leaders, but as teachers, tacticians, surrogate parents, and lore keepers. There is a common saying among Bone Gnawers, "a slowing hand leads to a speedier mind." While Glass Walkers may ignore their elders, Bone Gnawers respect them, and don't consider caring for the elderly suffering. Gnawers maintain a special respect for those elders whose minds faded, and gently help them "return to Gaia's embrace."

The Leader May Be Challenged at Any Time During Peace/The Leader May Not Be Challenged During Wartime: Save It for at Home

Cities are battlefields to Garou, and while there is the occasional, momentary outbreak of peace, they rarely last long. In the past, many Garou have taken that to mean that Garou are in a constant state of war, and as such, the leader may not ever be challenged. However, that leads to frustration and dissension in the ranks, many of whom feel that their voices are unheard. As such, city-based septs tend to be unified in the field and fractious at home. Wiser leaders let the young hotheads blow off steam (and Rage) in acceptable outlets.

Ye Shall Take No Action That Causes a Caern to Be Violated. Or We Will Kick the Ever-Living-Shit Out of You

City-based caerns are exceedingly rare. As such, the packs that protect those caerns take their jobs very seriously. Glass Walker caerns combine the latest in modern surveillance technology and bound spirits to secure their sacred grounds. Buildings possess high levels of technological security, and have well-armed Kinfolk working as security guards. Using dummy corporations, Glass Walkers try to buy up as much of the surrounding area as possible, and then use Kin-owned contractors to link the

buildings by secret tunnels and passageways. These modifications never show up on building plans, and are frequently obscured with the help of spirits. One area the Glass Walkers take special care to monitor is the sewer systems. Sewer-dwelling vampires or Black Spiral Dancer spies have infiltrated too many caerns for them to even consider creating secret escape routes into the sewer systems.

While Bone Gnawers may lack the high-tech tricks of the Glass Walkers, they more than make up for it with cunning and ingenuity. The Frankweilers are especially valued for their creativity in designing elaborate and effective traps and warning devices out of junk. Bone Gnawers also have better relations with the normal people near their caerns, and their frequent trading of food for information leads them to have a network of spies and watchmen the Glass Walkers would envy.

Natural Threats The Police

Damn cops. One or two have souls, maybe. But those donut-eating bastards would much rather play "roust-the-bum" than actually, I don't know, catch criminals. It's not like they don't know where the crooks are. It's not like they don't have guns. If they cared so much about my rights as they do about pushers', well, I wouldn't have so much work to do. Best thing I can say about them is that they happily ignore my work, and think my crew is just a rival gang taking out the competition.

— Midnight Charley, Bone Gnawer Ahroun

The police are guardians of human society, protecting the masses from elements that threaten the whole. They defend that status quo, and thus we can easily find ourselves on opposite sides. They don't know that the well-dressed lawyer is an agent of the Wyrm, and that the shabbily dressed protestor is a holy guardian of the

Disclaimer

In the World of Darkness, everything is darker, nastier and more corrupt, right? This includes cops and other officials. While police corruption is a real problem, in the World of Darkness, it is more widespread than in our world. The authors have the utmost respect for the police and other law enforcement officials. In general, the level of corruption presented here is higher than in the real world. Otherwise, it wouldn't be called "the World of Darkness."



Earth's spirit. But both Garou and cop realize that the murderer or the child pornographer is a problem that must be dealt with. They see the effects on the community; we see the reflection in the spirit world. In the end, they are agents of balance, as are we. Without us, the world would fall into the clutches of the Wyrm. Without the police, human society would collapse. While the Talons may see that as a worthy goal, we do not. As such, we go out of our way to avoid confrontations with law enforcement.

— Aaron Brokers-With-Spirits,
Glass Walker Theurge

In the course of their duties, Garou encounter the police, much in the same way that normal people do: when they break some minor law. Cops pull Garou over for speeding just like everyone else. It's just that Garou are more likely to have illegal weapons than the average driver. Additionally, many herbs and powders used for rituals are illegal to possess. Garou must be careful in dealing with the police. While certainly not even a SWAT team is a match for a single Garou, bursting into Crinos and ripping the arms off of a policeman is the fastest way to threaten the Veil.

While each state, county and city has different ranking systems and organizational structures, police fall into four basic categories: beat cops, detectives, special teams and desk jockeys. Beat cops are the ones out on patrol. Some drive squad cars, others walk a beat, and still others ride bicycles or horses. Their job is to patrol a certain area and respond to local calls for assistance. They are the first ones on the scene when trouble brews. Beat cops are generally armed with nightsticks and pistols. However, as any Glass Walker will tell you, that is not their most dangerous weapon. Their radios are greater threats than their sidearm. Bullets may sting when they go in, but are generally forgotten quickly. A beat cop calls for backup when someone reports a "bear loose on Maple Street" or when their partner goes down the

wrong alley and screams in horror at the sight of a battle between rival packs. This brings more policemen and more potential witnesses. Additionally, most squad cars come equipped with video cameras these days. Patrol officers generally respond to crimes in progress or ones recently reported.

The second major category of police officer is the detective. They generally wear street clothes, and are specialized in a certain criminal behavior, such as homicide, theft, illegal drugs, organized crime, arson, or sex crimes. Detectives handle the complex cases that cannot be solved immediately. They question suspects and gather evidence about crimes to present in court.

The third major branch of police work is the "special teams." Depending on the size of the city (and the size of the police budget), cities can have small, highly specialized teams of police officers. While the SWAT (Special Weapons And Tactics) get the fame and the glory, a particularly worrisome branch of law enforcement forces Garou to be more and more careful in modern times: the Crime Scene Investigators. With the advent of modern investigative techniques, Garou must worry about the inevitable drops of blood and hair fibers they leave behind. There is a small, but growing number of police scientists using DNA technology (see *Book of the Weaver*) and gathering pieces of the puzzle. Enough "tainted" blood samples with strange hormone levels and hair fibers that are too thick to be human, but with Homo sapiens base pairs have to be more than just a rash of mishandled samples. Kin-folk to Glass Walkers and Bone Gnawers have done what they could to steal back the evidence, but these scientists are on the right track. Other special teams of note include hostage negotiators, bomb squads or search-and-rescue teams. Lastly, there are the "desk jockeys." They maintain the records, man the all-important communications centers, and provide other support functions to the cops in the field.

Another branch of the police department that the Garou must constantly keep in mind is the juvenile authorities. Consider that a lot of Lost Cubs going through their First Changes end up on missing persons rolls. Additionally, cubs after they Change do not do well in normal schools. High school is a pressure cooker, even when the students don't have Rage boiling in their veins. Garou do a lot of home schooling, which means they have to deal with school districts if the cubs are to have some sort of official education.

A significant problem in the World of Darkness is police corruption. Police (both in the World of

Darkness and our own) are criminally underpaid. They, like everyone else, have families (or other habits) to feed. Similarly, many businessmen break the law in some minor way that can easily be said to "not hurt anyone." Maybe the workers are illegal immigrants and the cops are paid to look the other way. Or possibly restaurants do not follow health guidelines strictly enough. Paying off a cop ends up being cheaper than actually addressing the problem. But corruption can go much deeper. Cops can be paid by organized crime or drug dealers to look the other way. Sometimes, to nail "one of the bad guys," police must break the law themselves. Confessions are much easier to get with a nightstick to the kneecaps than with a nice word. In the World of Darkness, there are even more opportunities for police corruption. Vampires may not control the police department, but more than a few undead "princes" keep a small contingent of crooked cops on their payrolls. Many are blood-enslaved "ghouls" who possess supernatural strength and resistance to injury, as well as immunity to the Delirium. Similarly, large Pentex outfits pay off the police when necessary, or simply use their wealth and influence the way any large (and unscrupulous) corporation does to influence local politicians, and through them, the police.

City Politics

There's a tale I heard the other day from a Strider passing through town. He told me about this pack of cubs, fresh out of the Rite and thinking they knew everything. They were determined to wipe out all the Wyrm-taint in the city, and come home covered in glory. So anyways, they're out trying to find all the Leeches. I dunno why. Seen too many movies or something. There're better targets out there. But I digress... So, they figure out there's some Master Vampire out there. Snuff the big bad and everyone goes home. Now, they had been doing some semblance of detective work, and figured out that the Leeches had their fangs in city politics. K'Duh! So they figure the mayor is in on it, and bust into his office one night (Hizzoner was working late, you see), tie him up and start trying to beat the truth out of him. "Who's your Master?" Hizzoner gibbers he don't get it. "Who's the big bloodsucker?" Hizzoner keeps gibbering. "Who is the Master Vampire?" Hizzoner has, of course, no clue what these skinned "terrorists" are talking about. But the cubs get more and more pissed. One gets the bright idea that the Master Vamp had put some sort of Jedi Mind Trick on the him and beating the snot out of an overweight, forty-year old white guy just isn't as fun as they'd like it to be. Now, the Theurge has been using Sense Wyrm like once

every five minutes or something determined he's going to find something. You know what he got? Nothing but a headache. Vampires have the hooks in city politics. Sure. But they do it the same way everyone else buys off the city — with money and favors.

— Grandpa Spinner, Bone Gnawer Galliard

While no one person can be said to control a city, a mayor heads most municipal governments. In general, the mayor controls the bureaucracy, controls the budget, and can veto acts of the city council. The council, on the other hand, determines city policies and passes city ordinances. Depending on the city, the mayor can have absolute power, with the council lacking teeth, or the council can hold the power, with the mayor acting as a figurehead for the real powers acting behind the scenes.

While the mayor and city council are at the top of the civic bureaucracy, they are the tip of the proverbial iceberg. As cities grow, the bureaucracy “needed” to keep the trains on time grows at an ever-expanding rate. A short list of city departments includes (but is not limited to): Aviation, Building Services, Convention/Entertainment Facilities, Finance and Administration, Education, Fire, Health and Human Services, Housing, Human Resources, Legal, Library, Municipal Courts, Parks and Recreation, Planning and Development, Police, Public works, and Waste Management.

For the most part, cities award plush contracts for public works to people or organizations that helped elect the current powers that be. This is the main reason people raise millions of dollars to run for offices that pay a tiny fraction of what could be made in the private sector. Wealthy interests get their chosen representatives elected, and in return, they get fat public works contracts.

In the World of Darkness, cities are perpetually in budget crises. As the tax base flees to the suburbs, cities lose revenue. It becomes cheaper for companies to simply cut their losses and build new plants rather than update existing ones for modern uses. That is why so many downtown areas are run down. Their owners have fled to greener pastures, and there is no interest in fixing up the place. Some Glass Walkers have swooped in to buy up the cheap land, but they possess a microscopic fraction of the business capital needed to reverse urban decay.

Big (Brother) Media

For the most part, supernatural creatures in the World of Darkness have influence at best — not control — over mortal affairs and institutions. How-

ever, there remains an exception to this rule. Because every supernatural faction has an express interest in keeping the monsters that roam the night a secret, they cannot help but act more directly in keeping tabs on the media. With that in mind, individual Storytellers should decide for themselves how much influence Pentex (or the vampires, or the Technomancers, or Masquers Guild or the Bavarian Illuminati or whatever the hell) have with the mass media. Storytellers should consider the two opposing out-of-game requirements involved in this. The first is that, for the creatures of the night to remain hidden, they must, for their own survival, keep their secrets hidden. Otherwise, the entire tone of a chronicle shifts from one of secret factions warring in the night to an open war between humanity and the monsters. Storytellers who wish to run Apocalyptic campaigns often fire the opening shots with a television camera instead of a gun. The opposing out-of-game need is that, while the creatures of the night enjoy their secrecy, it should never be taken for granted. Players should not take it for granted that their actions will *never* show up on the six o'clock news. This requires a delicate balancing act on the part of the players and Storyteller. They should take care in crafting adventures dealing with, for instance, a news crew discovering the players' pack.

With these principles in mind, here are some suggestions for how to handle the mass media. Most large media organizations (local television stations, radio, newspapers, etc.) are the ones with supernatural creatures pulling the strings. Depending on the sort of stories the Storyteller wishes to run (and the games in her game library), it could be Drones, vampires, Technomancers, or even some mundane government cartel that knows about the supernatural but wants to keep it quiet. *They* (whoever *They* happen to be) get editors to bury stories, cut live feeds at the right time, mock groups that do try to expose The Truth, and otherwise squelch supernatural stories.

However, the past few years have seen an explosion of media outlets. More and more people get their daily news from the web. The Internet has no central governing authority, and its influence on “regular” media outlets is growing. As such, Evil Secret Conspiracy Groups cannot muzzle these smaller organizations. These web-sites, small-press magazines and late-night call-in shows are the ones with the freedom to pursue the supernatural, with no Big Brother there to stop them. The best that they can do is make sure that nobody takes these

fringe outlets seriously. This allows Storytellers to run adventures where there is a risk of exposure, but it doesn't necessarily mean the end of the world if the players fail. The grainy picture of a werewolf doesn't carry the same threat to the Veil when it's covered by the weekly tabloid that regularly shows the adventures of the Bat-Faced Man and his Alien Love-Child.

Corporations Trashing Gaia Without Pentex's Help

Really more of a Gnawer topic but let me hit you with some numbers. In 1999, even after you factor out the Pentex fronts we know about, the United States generated over forty million tons of hazardous waste. That's the stuff that'll really mess you up — like acids, corrosives or toxic. Think that's a big number? The year before that, Americans tossed away over 220 million tons of regular old trash, or about 4 1/2 pounds of trash per person per day. Add to it the crap Pentex intentionally spews out and you've got one big pile of shit.

— Cruncher, Glass Walker Galliard

While it is convenient for some Garou (or players) to believe otherwise, not every corporation that wrecks the environment, takes advantage of their customers, or delivers shoddy overpriced merchandise has a Pentex-trained junior vice-president at the helm. While the efforts of Pentex lobbyists make it legally easier for the rest of the world to wreck the environment, ordinary, everyday companies would do an excellent job by themselves. One of the realities Garou must face is that not every evil act stems from a Bane lodged in someone's soul. It just takes a different set of priorities. As long as companies place higher value on stock prices than clean air and jobs over virgin forests, the Garou will have enemies to fight. Not only that, but companies not taking an active part in the Apocalypse provide a much more difficult target for the Garou. It is easy, relatively speaking, to clean out a hive of Black Spiral Dancers using an Endron drilling platform to wake up a trapped Wyrm beast. Claws and fangs, on the other hand, do little good in a courtroom. There is not much that Garou can do directly in these arenas. However, that does not keep them from trying. They would not be Garou if they gave up. A Houston-based Glass Walker sept has sent numerous Kinfolk to law school, in the hopes of finding ways to fight these battles in the courtroom.

That is not to say that all civil actions against polluting corporations must fall to Kinfolk. While not as "sexy" as combating an Endron strike team, the supernatural abilities of the Garou can be put to

good use in gathering evidence against an illegal polluter (or against a politician who fills his campaign chest with bribes on their behalf). Additionally, some firms are not above trying to apply force to the "tree-huggers trying to put us out of business." Of course, these leg-breakers will certainly find themselves with much more than they bargained for when the industrious young lawyer's "country cousin" comes to town. Sometimes, after dealing with insurmountable odds and threats too large for a pack to handle, a simple session of cathartic violence against an easy foe can put the spirit back into a group that has just faced too much darkness.

Outlaws

Oh, for Gaia's sake, lay off, will ya? We're not the Mafia. Yeah, we break a lot of laws to get things done, but we're not the freakin' Sopranos, okay?

— Jimmy "The Claw" Claussen, Glass Walker Philodox

Some Garou philosophers (and more than a few Ragabash) have compared organized crime families to Garou families. Both have goals and objectives outside "normal" society. Their enemies are powerful, entrenched forces that wish to crush them utterly. Both have a tendency to use violence as an acceptable problem-solving tool. Both keep their groups together by bonds of family, loyalty and silence. While there certainly are similarities in their structures, the goals are completely different.

Criminals, in a nutshell, want to take money (or goods or services) from the people who have properly earned it. In a real and metaphysical sense, they feed upon the community, much in the way vampires feed on individuals. While there are certainly gangsters who, unbeknownst to them, feed the Urge Wyrms of Greed, Desire, and Cruelty, many Garou see criminals as a symptom of the larger problem. Certainly, outfits that try to squeeze protection money out of businesses owned by Kinfolk end up messily dead, but for the most part, Garou try to focus on the larger enemies. The major exception to this is the Bone Gnawer tribe. More than a few Gnawer vigilantes make it their business to protect certain areas of town (and not just places near caerns). Their motto is "not on my block." Some even go so far as to believe that the Big Things (like stopping the Apocalypse, destroying every last vampire, etc.) are for other Garou. The high-ranking mucky-mucks constantly lording their rank and breeding over "lesser" Garou. So, if nobody wants their help with the Big Things, then they will focus on the small things, and get them right. They

believe making a difference, a thousand and one different small ways, will add up to one Big Thing.

The Church

One of the side effects of the horrors of the World of Darkness is mankind's instinctive religious reaction to the darker nature of their world. While the everyday people may not consciously know that there are monsters out in the night, there is still a sense of fundamental wrongness that drives them into churches, mosques, synagogues, temples, circles and a thousand other brands of faith. People do not attend church for comfort and support — they attend because they're afraid. This subconscious fear shapes the churches as well. They are larger, more ornate, and (of course) festooned with gargoyles to drive off the evil spirits. Churches practice the "old-time religion," full of fire and brimstone and dire warnings if the parishioners do not follow the path of the straight and narrow. Exorcism, while not advertised, is a common practice, though unfortunately many people who need actual spiritual assistance go unnoticed and those needing psychological and medical attention have nonexistent demons cast out. An additional problem with the fear that shapes religious thought in the World of Darkness is that it can lead to (if one can even conceive of it) even more religious intolerance than we have in the real world. With so much at stake, there is a need not only to seek religious shelter, but also to believe that they are the only ones who are right. Churches are much more insular, with ecumenical programs almost nonexistent. This is not just rivalry between different forms of religion, but between sects of the same church, or sometimes even between parishes.

Because of their need to blend in, most Kinfolk families attend a local church, generally a popular and well-attended one with a large congregation. While this can lead to unpleasant conversations when a young Kin learns "the family secret," after thousands of years of blending in, most families are able to break the truth to their children with a minimum of stress. And, if the confused teenage Kinfolk lets a few secrets slip, it's easy to cover up the actions of a "confused" teenager. However, on occasion, Kin and Garou have had to deal with possible exposure as rumors of witchcraft have haunted more than a few families. With the recent acceptability of nature religions, a few Kin families have tried to "out" themselves as pagans with varying levels of success.

Some Kinfolk even serve in the clergy. While their day jobs often raise eyebrows with the rest of the family, these Kin are able to meld Gaian spiritualism with the dogmas of other religions. Kinfolk clergy tend to fall into one of two categories. Most of them are mavericks in their own orders, pushing Gaian tenets into their teachings. They tend to be very popular with those who attend their services, but often end up in political and theological struggles with their superiors. A small fraction of Kinfolk turn to human religions as a way of rejecting their Garou ancestry. Though many Kinfolk are treated kindly by their Garou relatives, still others are forced into practices and behaviors that make wearing a burqa seem pleasant. When they do escape their persecutors, they often embrace very "human" activities, not the least of which is a spirituality of human, not werewolf, origins. Rumors persistently circulate of an all-Kinfolk anti-werewolf fighting force sponsored by a secretive sect of the Catholic Church, dating back to the Inquisition.

Plain, Old Everyday Folks

When it comes to the average, everyday, man-on-the-street, most Garou really don't give them a second thought. At most, normal people are thought of as bystanders or perhaps tacit co-conspirators with the Weaver or Wyrm. Some gamers have even been known to joke that there were no normal people left in the World of Darkness, and that the last normal person became a Hunter a couple of years ago. This is far from the truth. If one were to add up all of the supernatural creatures in the World of Darkness, from Ananasi to Zhyzhak, it would still end up being a fraction of a fraction of a fraction of one percent. Even if the numbers were expanded by including all of the people directly touched by the supernatural (from the unfortunates vampires feed on to the even more unfortunate parapsychologists who hunt for proof of the supernatural), it would still be a tiny fraction of the population.

However, once one considers the *indirect* effects the various supernatural forces have on everyday people, the number swells to almost every person on the planet. These mystical groups affect everything from the environment (imagine every state having the same, nonexistent air-quality laws that Texas does) to the economy (one of the tenets often mentioned in setting the scene in the World of Darkness is that there is an almost perpetual recession going on). People are scared that they will not be able to take care of their families. While these fears can seem petty to supernatural warriors at-

tempting to save the world from a cosmic entropic force, it is this fear that drives man in the World of Darkness. These fears keep them from caring about the environment or overpopulation or the other symptoms of the spiritual Apocalypse on the horizon.

All Garou know that changes in the physical world lead to changes in the Umbra, and vice versa. Cut down a tree in the Umbra, and the one in the material world withers and dies. Clear out a nest of Banes, and the “real” locale improves. Some Garou are experimenting with direct action in the lives of normal people, in the hope that these changes lead to larger effects in both worlds. The Children of Gaia have even had some small success in transforming people with no Garou blood in their families into actual Kinfolk.

Supernatural Threats

First vampires, now witches. No wonder you can still afford a house in Sunnydale.

— Xander, *Buffy The Vampire Slayer*

While the mundane side of the city provides challenges to the mind and cunning of a Garou, it is against the supernatural that the city becomes a physical battleground. One of the traits all of the supernatural entities share is the need to keep their existence secret. Not just that of their own breed of monster, but all monsters. Once it’s proven that werewolves are real, it’s a short step to believing the same of vampires, zombies, ghosts and wizards. This has led to a “Cold War” mentality in the various magical denizens of a city. All sides try to keep as quiet as they can. All sides try to spy on each other. All sides keep close tabs on the media, making sure that no proof of supernatural evidence appears. On more than one occasion, Garou have gone into local media outlets to recover an incriminating videotape or photograph, only to discover it is already gone. When questioned, photographers show no memory of ever taking the picture. However, that does not mean that there is some sort of “happy midnight gang” of monsters working together for the common good. Generally, when this sort of thing happens, the other monsters use the proof for their own gain. Perhaps a vampire wants to make sure the werewolves who mauled his blood brothers get some payback. The evidence might help lead them back to the pack, and from the pack, to “wherever it is those damned lupines live.”

Vampires

I hear a lot of talk from Garou who don’t know any better that Glass Walkers have secret alliances with this vampire cult or that vampire sect. Maybe some packs do, but elders tend to beat the crap out of packs that stupid. Let me cut through the crap you’ve seen on TV and break it down for you. If you paid attention as cubs you know how to kill ‘em. Their tribes and sects don’t matter either. When push comes to shove that crap doesn’t matter. For all their power, when it comes down to it, all vampires are scared. Because they don’t grow old, they get to think, “Hey, I could live forever if I play this right.” So they get focused on immortality. You and me, we live on in our cubs. These guys can’t have children in the real sense, so instead of turning outward to make the world better for their kids, they turn inwards, making their worlds safer. They create elaborate lairs so they don’t get turned to flambé by the sun. They surround themselves with enslaved servants to protect them during the day, and make more vampires to do their dirty work at night. They way I hear it, the oldest of their kind spend most of their time comatose in hidden lairs, fucking with each other by proxy in their sleep. The younger, weaker ones don’t want to be under their elders’ thumbs, so they do the same damn things to those weaker than them. It’s all so... pathetic. And it’s not worth our time. We don’t have any secret alliances with vampires, nor are we particularly at war.

— Jason Steel-Towers, Glass Walker Philodox

Vampires, by their very nature, are city creatures. Cities provide them with the things they need: blood, shelter from the sun, and protection from humanity. Some vampires claim that cities started due to vampiric influence — a claim that Garou scoff at as a particular example of vampire egotism. Certainly, vampires are well suited to life surrounded by thousands of potential meals. They also have the most to lose, and guard their secrecy with a fervor matched only by the depths to which they will sink in order to protect their immortal carcasses. While many of the undead have mind-tricks that let them escape memory, the majority do not, and must rely on ruthlessness and cunning to cover their tracks.

While many tribes savor hunting vampires (sometimes even using vampire hunts as rites of passage), most city Garou have learned not to make treaties or alliances with the undead, but to leave them be. After millennia of warfare, the Garou have yet to get the upper hand over their undead



foes, and it doesn't look like the tables are turning any time soon. Although vampires are by their very existence corrupt parasites in humanlike form (some Garou theorize them to be a form of fomor that requires an already dead host), they aren't as immediate a threat as, say, a Hive of Black Spiral Dancers. The younger vampires often seem content to play at being human, and are comparatively harmless, while the elder vampires are possibly more trouble to destroy than they're worth. As such, vampires are often seen as low-priority targets. That said, when vampires and Garou find themselves at cross-purposes, the Garou are not afraid to strike fast and hard.

Vampires, like Garou, associate in packs. However, the name is about the only thing they share. Vampire packs stay together for mutual survival and no vampire can truly be said to trust another. The only trust a vampire can be said to have is the belief that no one else is mind-controlling its minions. In order to ensure their privacy and security, most vampires create a web around themselves. One layer is physical. Most vampires have a secret haven

(or, possibly more than one) that is lined with the strongest walls and the toughest security they can muster. While they may think they are masters of the night, by day they are much less powerful. Another layer is made up of minions. While older Leeches may have dozens of minions (mortals, blood-enslaved Renfield-type henchmen or even lesser vampires), even the youngest neonate has some circle of followers. It is necessary, for simple survival. It may be a well-trained guard dog or possibly a lawyer who doesn't ask questions about their "peculiar" client who only has time for meetings after standard hours. Since the undead cannot walk around by day, they need eyes, ears and shields. The third layer is supernatural. Some vampires know blood rituals useful in defending themselves from spirits or even Garou. Others rely on the network of debts and favors all vampires seem to owe each other. They may not personally know how to protect themselves, but they may know someone who does. Vampires with any experience fighting werewolves often trade their knowledge for other favors, thus increasing their own power and status.

The Infamous "Treaties"

In many games, especially LARPs, Storytellers should feel free to create whatever treaties between Kindred and Garou they need for their stories. In crossover chronicles or live-action settings where large numbers of Kindred and Garou player-characters are in the same, small place, treaties and other pacts can be necessary to keep the players from slaughtering each others' characters on a nightly basis. Players and Storytellers should be encouraged to use whatever means available to ensure that all players have fun.

However, in chronicles where you can manage to swing a cat without hitting another supernatural being, such treaties are exceptionally rare. Historically, virtually all of them were broken within a century. Kindred and Garou have few common enemies and generally can't be in the same room with each other for very long before something bloody happens. While many cubs have heard tales around the campfires about a city where the vampires and werewolves get along, it's generally an urban legend. At best, Garou and Kindred have a sense of the other side's territories, and try to avoid them, for their own safety. A rare Garou knows how to get in touch with a specific vampire, and in times of emergency, the two sides can pass information on to each other — always bearing in mind that their "contact" might be passing misinformation, of course. The two groups have been engaged in a cold war for millennia, after all.

In the end, just as player characters are exceptions to many rules, so are individual campaigns. If the Storyteller thinks she can tell a good crossover story, or even run a crossover chronicle, she should. The White Wolf Stormtroopers™ won't knock down your door and take away your dice.

Savvy urban Garou have gone out of their way to learn what they can about the hunting habits of vampires. Such information is useful not only for hunting the Leeches when they get out of hand, but also for avoiding useless confrontations, protecting Kinfolk and simply knowing the enemy. Most urban werewolves are aware that club districts offer an ideal feeding ground for vampires, who can take victims home with a promise of sex, drugs or the like. The better-informed Garou can even tell if

there are particular places that specific vampires are known to hunt. (At the Storyteller's option, this kind of knowledge can be gained by amassing multiple successes on a high-difficulty Occult or Streetwise roll. Sabbat vampires and others who are more cavalier about casually killing their victims tend to be easier to find, and the difficulty may be reduced for hunting down such monsters.)

There are few things that warm the blood of a vampire, but one of them is revenge. Because of this, and the web of debts all vampires seem to have between each other, a vampire will often seek revenge for some offense. Slay a master vampire's "favored" spawn and the master may have the rest of his "childer" seek out the Garou responsible and exact awful revenge. A group of vampires armed with silver bullets and knives is the least of their problems. During the War of Chicago, a pack of Garou returned to a Kinfolk safehouse, only to find all of the Kin dead, except for one, the youngest daughter. The Leeches had turned her into one of them and left her for the Garou to find. It is perhaps the most heartbreakin duty any Garou must perform, to put down the animated corpse of a loved one. On occasion, a softhearted cub has tried to protect his undead relative (or worse, offspring), but the danger is simply too high. Even Kin kept largely in the dark about the nature of Garou possesses some information about their relatives, even if it's only a list of their cousins. Many vampires have telepathic abilities, and even the most strong-willed Kin cannot resist the dominating mind-powers of a master vampire. When exposed, Garou protecting undead Kinfolk suffer massive losses of honor, and all are forced to kill the Kin themselves.

Zombies & Chants

Vampires are not the only form of undead to give Garou trouble. Around the same time the Red Star Anthelios appeared in the Umbral sky, a disaster in the realm of the dead led to massive numbers of corpses crawling out of the ground on their own. These newly risen zombies are the subject of much speculation among Garou mystics and scholars. Many believe that they are another sign that the Apocalypse is nigh. Whatever the reason, they are a problem to city-dwelling Garou. While the most horrific of the walking dead create an effect much like the Delirium, many do not. Additionally, due to their single-mindedness, many act in ways that threaten to expose supernatural creatures to the larger world. As such, while Garou don't make it a priority to go zombie hunting, they tend to kill zombies whenever discovered. For some septs, el-



ders hand down "Days of the Dead" as punishments for minor offenses by packs or individual Garou. The punished werewolves must locate, hunt and bring down a certain number of zombies (generally proven by bringing in left hands) before their "community service time" is deemed complete. Since the walking corpses aren't that common, a Day of the Dead can often stretch over weeks or even months, even in places where there are enough lurching corpses to make a Day of the Dead feasible.

Ghosts, generally lacking a physical presence to rend, prove a harder problem for urban werewolves. While Silent Striders possess quite a bit of lore about ghosts, Glass Walkers and Bone Gnawers do have their share of experience with restless dead. The more people, the more dead people and thus, the more wraiths. Additionally, the more violent city lifestyles generate more angry spirits. When faced with a troublesome ghost, Garou tend to go for the quickest solution. If smashing the items that anchor the spirit to the physical world gets the job done faster than solving whatever unresolved issues keep the spirit around, they do that. Silent Striders to the exception, most Garou consider ghosts to be unnatural spirits, only a step up from Banes. With that in mind, a particular Bone Gnawer caern in Pittsburgh is notable for the spirit of a slain Kin that helps guard the bawn. The word has spread to other Gnawer packs, leading some to search for ghosts, and offer them protection and support in return for their services as watchers and spies.

Hunters

The magic baseball bat brigade? Nobody really knows what their story is. First year or so they were around, everyone was pointing fingers every which way. The vampires did it, but they kill vampires. The wizards were behind it, but then we heard tales of wizards getting kacked too. They're Kami, or fomori or

Drones or some kind of Wyld-spirit in human flesh, but the Furies say that's not it either. So here's what we do know. They can sense us somehow, and we really don't have any way of sensing them. They have a hard-on for killing all of the things that go bump in the night. They're really determined. And here's the kicker: they're getting better at it.

— Hawk, Glass Walker Ahroun

The imbued are new arrivals in the World of Darkness, but are learning the ropes quickly. Fortunately for the Garou, imbued hunters aren't as interested in them as they are other supernatural entities (such as vampires). In fact, it's rare that the two groups cross paths, and most of the time the werewolves wind up convinced they had met fomori, mages or simply strong-willed humans. However, the increasing presence of the imbued has forced some septs to be more careful in general. While the average person knows better than to go into certain areas after dark, hunters are known to collect such urban folklore and investigate it. This leads to investigations that threaten the Veil. This has led some Garou to crises of conscience. Many empathize with the hunters, and point out that their missions are not so dissimilar. Indeed, when hunters target a Garou, it is generally because they did something to provoke the hunt. To keep the Veil intact, Garou can find themselves having to hunt the hunters. Some young voices believe that the Garou should reveal themselves to the hunters and work together to fight common foes. Other voices point out the growing number of Garou who have fallen at the hands of hunters. Additionally, few hunters are willing to give Garou a chance to explain themselves. Though their unexplained supernatural powers may give them some small advantage, the fact of the matter is that even lone Garou are so physically threatening that they cannot afford to waste that one second when facing an enraged Crinos.

The Men in Black

"Get up and run, dammit," barked Night-Eyes, looking over her shoulder.

Smashes-Steel shook his head and looked pointedly down to his side. His massive paw was all that held his sliced intestines in. "Wound won't heal. Spider-bullet." He could feel something gnawing at his insides. He looked down the dirty alley. "I am alpha, and I order you to go. Griffin's Red Song must know of this. Warn the others."

Night-Eyes looked to her alpha. Smashes-Steel could almost hear the howl of sorrow being choked down. "The black-spider-men will pay."

Smashes-Steel coughed, "Only if the sept hears your tale. Go. Now!"

Night-Eyes shrank down to Hispo form, so she could go faster. She wanted so much to howl, but the Weaver-spawn would hear.

Smashes-Steel watched her leave. If I die, I do it on four paws, he swore, and let himself collapse back to his birth form. He stood weakly.

The bright halogen headlights flooded the dank alleyway. Smashes-Steel heard the two men get out. Dark suits like a spider's body. Dark glasses like a spider's eyes. No smell at all, which bothered him more than the fact that the one on the left had been disemboweled ten minutes ago. They held guns, like most apes, but Smashes-Steel knew these guns were something else entirely.

"Surrender," they said in harmony. Smashes-Steel growled. Using his dying Rage, he ran towards the two. He leaped at the one on the right. The guns blazed.

In the distance, Night-Eyes howled for her lost leader. The Men in Black turned to each other. A strand of Weaver's web vibrated, telling them her position. Had they emotions, they would have smiled.

Attributes: Strength 5, Dexterity 5 (precise), Stamina 5, Charisma 2, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2, Perception 5, Intelligence 3, Wits 2

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 3, Brawl 4, Computer 5, Drive 4, Expression 3, Firearms 4, Investigation 4, Law 4, Leadership 3, Linguistics 5, Science 4, Stealth 3

Rage 0, Gnosis 4, Willpower 9

Health Levels: OK, -1, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5, Incapacitated (Note: when MIB are wounded, their impairment doesn't come from pain dulling their actions, it is from the physical damage itself impairing their movements. Storytellers should emphasize their "robotic" natures when describing a MIB taking damage.)

Drone Powers: Computer Link, Cybersenses, Gauntlet Passage, Memory Caress, Regeneration, Voice of Reason. See Possessed or Book of the Weaver for complete details. For those without either book, MIB can: control computers by touching them, duplicate the Glass Walker Gift, Step Sideways (though they step sideways more easily the higher the Gauntlet), duplicate the effects of the Delirium for purposes of memory erasure, regenerate one Health Level/round, and easily hypnotize people.

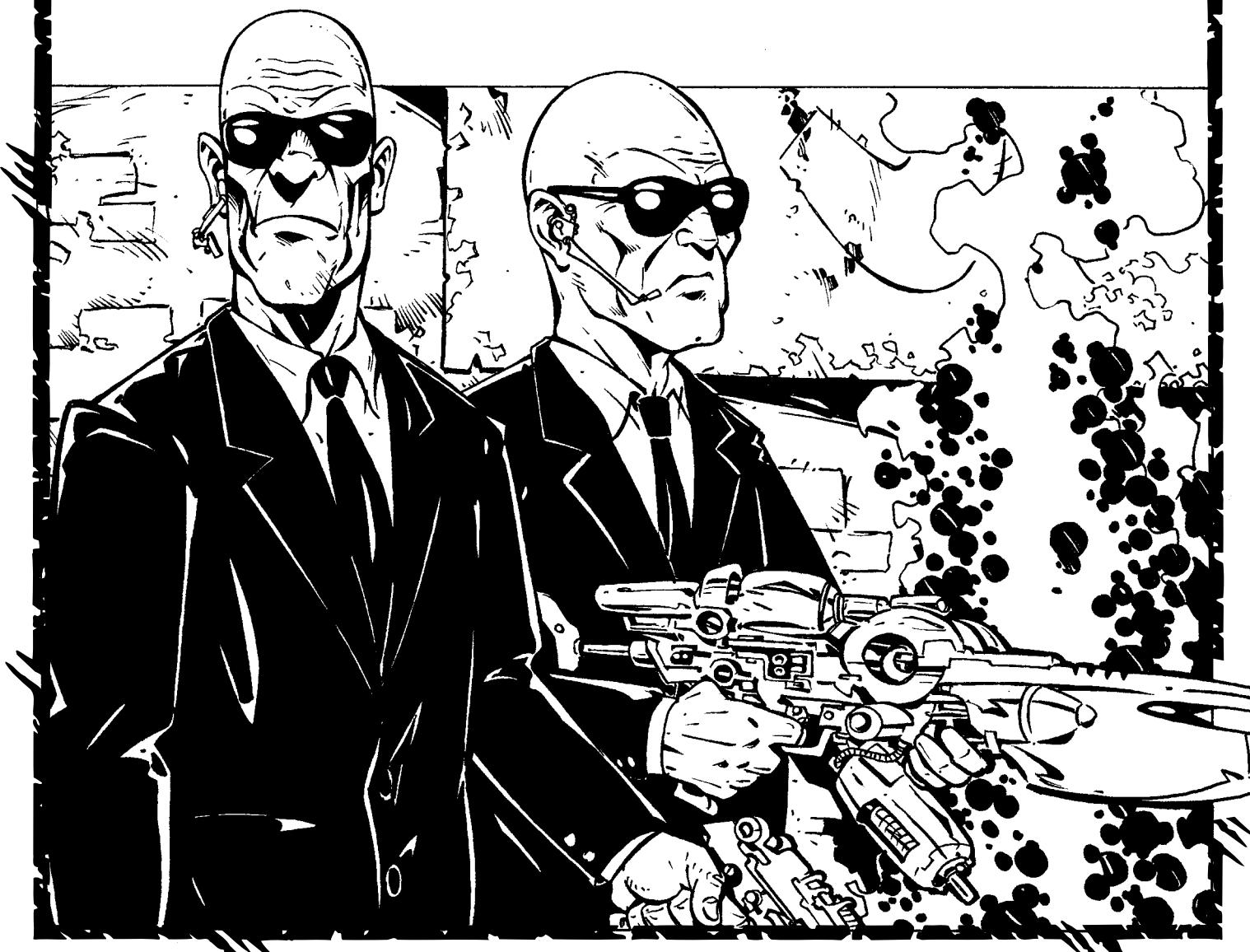
Sidearm: Treat as a Heavy Semi-Automatic Pistol that does not run out of ammunition. When hunting shapeshifters, they have been known to carry special clips of "Spider" bullets. These rounds do aggravated damage.

Badge: Their special ID cards, when shown to mundane authorities, cause them to be treated as higher-ranking authorities. Anyone from a local policeman to a five-star general will go along with a Man in Black. These cards only work in the hands of a Man in Black. The cards themselves appear to be covered in a hypnotic, fractal pattern.

Image: The Men in Black are average (to the point of blandness) looking men, dressed in black suits and dark sunglasses. They speak in monotone, without any inflection or accent. They remain calm and unemotional, even in the direst of situations. If they can be said to express any emotion, it is their feeling of superiority. Even when their arms have been ripped off, they maintain that, in the end, their foes will fail.

Background: As far back as recorded history, mysterious men in black accompanied tales of the strange and unusual. In recent times, the story is that they cover up supernatural occurrences by threats and intimidation. Some say that the Men in Black are part of some larger counter-supernatural conspiracy. However, the Men in Black Garou are most familiar with stem from a more familiar source: the Weaver. These MIB are Drones, humans transformed by Weaver spirits in the way that Banes change people into fomori

As with all Drones, they are linked into a hive-mind with other Drones and Weaver-spirits. When enemies threaten the Pattern Web, the Weaver responds with the Men in Black. Their job is twofold. First, they stamp out the threats to the Pattern Web. Generally, the MIB work in pairs, though for larger threats (such as a pack of Garou), larger teams assemble. They always assemble in powers of two. While a tactical team of MIB handles the physical (or spiritual) threat, others



Hey, what about Mage?

Yeah, these guys aren't the agents of the Technocracy. While some theorists call the science-based mages agents of the Weaver, they aren't. Not really. The Technocrats, for better or worse, are mages, a different sort of beast entirely. For those of you who like to "cross the streams," cross cosmologies and rules systems, feel free, but these MIB aren't "those" MIB. Who says there has to be just one set of MIB anyway? Maybe there is a secret shadow war between these two groups of black-suited agents of stasis? (And guess which pack of Garou gets caught in the crossfire?)

use their hypnotic abilities to calm any bystanders, and convince them that any strangeness they may have witnessed had a rational explanation. Those witnesses who do retain their memories often mention that these Men In Black themselves acted somewhat strangely. Some say the MIB don't recognize simple objects, like forks or pencils. Others say they seem to ignore pain, or speak in outdated idioms. In large part, this is due to the static nature of Drones. If a Drone uses slang like "23 skidoo" it is likely because when the Weaver created the Drone, that was normal slang. Drones do not age (nor do they learn), and many have been around for long periods of time. Between missions, they live in stasis, generally ensconced in nests in the Pattern Web. When needed, they emerge from their nests, armed by Pattern Spiders with whatever arms and equipment they may need. As they are part of the Weaver's hive mind, they do not require briefings, or planning. They simply know what the problem is and what their mission is. If the MIB can be said to have a weakness, it is their strict and logical patterns of thought and behavior. Garou fighting Men in Black should get in touch with their Wyld selves, and constantly change tactics.

Storytelling Notes: Men in Black are a large part of conspiracy theory mythos. As such, adventures featuring them should borrow from the tropes of the genre. Use black helicopters. Have Kinfolk show up with missing time and strange scars. Emphasize the strange and unusual in normal patterns of behavior.

Fera and the City

Just as Garou themselves are rarely found in a city, the other Fera are not often found there.

Certain of Gaia's other breeds are almost never found in a large city, while certain ones are content enough to spend their time there. Of the various Fera, the only ones with a significant presence in urban areas are the Ananasi and the Ratkin. The other shapechangers tend to keep away from cities, preferring their solitary wilderness homes. Lone members of other breeds may enter the city, but rarely do they consider it their home. They see cities much in the way most Garou do: as a place they have to go, but would avoid if they could. Their duties may lead them into urban areas, because that's where they have to go. With that in mind, Fera often treat cities the way suburban commuters do. They will work, play, meet, eat, study and do business in cities, but their homes tend to be away from the smog and other forces of pollution.

Only a few Fera make good characters for the troupe in a city game; more often than not, the Fera should provide an unexpected wild influence in the city as Storyteller characters for Garou to encounter. In general there are a few ways to find a member of one of the other Changing Breeds in the city when they might be unexpected:

- **Lost Cubs:** The other Fera are even less likely than Garou to have Lost Cubs; as the other Breeds themselves have smaller populations, breeding habits are watched carefully, and they monitor their descendants closely. Still, mistakes do happen, and long-dormant mystic genetics occasionally express themselves where least expected. The cliché here is to have a Lost Cub born at the local zoo, but there are other places such young might be born. Some city residents illegally keep wild animals as pets, particularly big cats, but they could just as well keep a bear, alligator, large snake, or other creature.

- **On A Mission From Gaia:** It's relatively easy to run the city mouse/country mouse story with Garou, but when the Storyteller throws in the inherent hostility between the Changing Breeds the storyline takes on added depth. One of the Fera might be in town on business or romantic reasons, or reasons pertaining more closely to the supernatural — perhaps pursuing another supernatural creature or entity into town, monkeywrenching a corporation, or hunting for a spirit or a rite teacher.

- **Conflict:** One Changer or a whole pack might wander into the city specifically because of conflicts with the Garou there. Perhaps the Garou are descended from particularly heinous criminals from the War of Rage and the ancestor-spirits of the Fera demand retribution, or perhaps the Garou themselves did something that the Fera finds objec-

tionable. The troupe's pack doesn't need to be at the center of this conflict — if there is a large enough Garou population in the city, the troupe's pack might be called upon to act as mediators (or defenders) between invading Fera and local Garou.

Ananasi

Cities call to the werespiders. Their spider-goddess calls them to preserve the balance between Wyrm, Weaver and Wyld, and no place is more out-of-balance than the cities. The Ananasi way is not to barrel in, all fangs and claws like some Fera. They are known as the Patient Ones, for good reason. Their way is slow and steady. They build long-term plans, and try to work subtly, rather than with the raging force of the Garou. What's more, cities are convenient for the Ananasi because of the high population density; since werespiders need blood to live, they may as well stay close to a high concentration of the source. It's a fact of life that has resulted in unfortunate comparisons to vampires before, most notably on the cusp of the War of Rage.

Ananasi create Sylie, havens that connect them to the Umbra, and allow them to better hear the call of Queen Ananasa. Sylie tend to be extremely well hidden and well protected on both sides of the Gauntlet. However, a determined hunter can discover a Sylie. In doing so, they have made a patient and determined enemy.

In the "spies watching spies watching spies" network of supernatural agencies in cities, the Ananasi are the masters. Their ability to dissolve into millions of tiny spiders gives them opportunities like no other to spy on everyone else, opportunities they are glad to take (as much as the cold-blooded spiders can feel gladness). Ananasi approach the Garou as they do everything else: as tools in their missions to preserve the balance. They sometimes act as contacts and resources to city-based septs, often without the Garou knowing the nature of their assistance. The spiders work through intermediaries and other layers of protection. They do not fear the Garou, but they do respect their strength, and would rather see that strength be used for something more productive than squashing spiders.

In a few, very rare cases, Fera (mostly those who follow Queen Ananasa as a totem) will openly meet and work with the Ananasi. However, these alliances rarely last longer than a single mission. At best, they may keep channels of communication open. But the unfeeling nature of the Ananasi inevitably causes conflicts with the extremely passionate Fera.

A few Ananasi quickly come to an understanding with urrah — they agree to feed city Garou information about Weaver activity and other intelligence they might pick up, and in return werewolves leave them alone. Many Ananasi play a dangerous game in the city, passing themselves off as members of whatever group they need help from, whether it is Leeches, servants of Gaia, or ordinary mortals. Either they become very good at this, or they die.

Bastet

No Bastet is currently known to have its Den-Realm within a city, so they appear in cities only as interlopers. One might make its home in a city for a long period of time, if it were engaged in a long-term plan, but it certainly doesn't consider the city home. The Bastet are wild cats, not domestic animals in the least — even the Pumonca tend to shun the cities more assiduously than their puma Kin do. A taghairm (a great gathering of Bastet) would only happen within a city under the direst and strangest of circumstances. However, a single Qualmi werelynix might make its way into the city in pursuit of a magical enigma, or a Bagheera could conceivably spend time in a city university setting. The Eyes of Gaia might be required to be anywhere if necessary, whether they like it or not.

Corax

Although not particularly urban creatures, many wereravens have adapted to life in the city as just another way of being where the action is. Most people would mistake a raven-form Corax for a large crow. It's not a mistake the Corax are proud of, but it works.

The Corax bear no particular grudge against the Garou, and rarely play the part of antagonist; to the raven-folk's minds, the War of Rage was a long, long time ago, and there's no point blaming modern Garou for the deeds of their ancestors. Sometimes they even serve as friendly contacts, fulfilling their duty as the messengers of Gaia by passing along word of important targets or devilish goings-on for the Garou to investigate. Information is their stock in trade. Therefore they spend plenty of time in cities, digging up dirt to sell to any number of interested parties. The Corax's activities in town depend entirely on who's busy, what they're doing, and who might care. That is to say, a Corax might well spend her time spying on the local Garou, and selling news of their activity to other Garou or other Fera. Few Corax would sell that kind of information to servants of the Wyrm or Weaver, but they might be tricked or coerced into doing so. In any event,

the majority of Corax will spy on Gaia's enemies in the city, and give or sell that information to Gaia's allies, there or elsewhere.

Some Corax make excellent profilers, able to second-guess an enemy's tactics or mindset with great accuracy. However, the wereravens have had a traditional problem with keeping their beaks shut, and there are a lot of potential eavesdroppers in the city. A Corax who unwittingly commits a breach of security (or even a potential breach of the Veil) is a major danger to the pack, even if she doesn't mean to be.

Gurahl

Gurahl live and gather far from cities. Rarely would one enter a city — as with many other Fera, only a dire and strange event would drive them to such a task. It's arguable that an encounter with a Gurahl would actually detract from the mood of an urban story, so use them with care.

Mokolé

Though most Mokolé dwell far from human habitation — in the darkest jungles of South America and Africa — popular legend makes it tempting to place them in the sewers of major cities. In truth, only the very largest cities in the world could host such groups, and even then there probably aren't more than two that do so (Mexico City and New York City being the most obvious candidates, but the Storyteller may have other ideas).

Presumably, the Mokolé would prefer life in actual rivers to sewer-dwelling (such as those of Calcutta), but for those Storytellers who can't resist some urban were-crocodiles, it's possible. The Garou of those cities wouldn't have anything approaching open and friendly relations with the Dragon Breed. Bone Gnawers and other sewer-dwellers simply know which corners of the underground to avoid. That means that they also know where to lead enemies who pursue them into the sewer, a tactic that has saved more than one Gnawer's bacon. The Mokolé represent an ominous and silent presence in the dark parts of the undercity; they do not join packs composed of Garou and other Fera, and would seriously detract from the mood if they went stomping around downtown in Archid form.

Nagah

A few Nagah live in the vast cities of India, hunting out and purging the influence of the Wyrm where they find it there. As in the rest of the world, of course, Nagah in Indian cities do little to call attention to themselves; the Garou and other Fera

who live in the cities of India are almost entirely unaware of the serpents in their midst. In the rest of the world, however, the Nagah enter cities only in search of their prey, and leave soon afterward; the death they leave behind is the only sign of their passing.

Nuwisha

Nuwisha are creatures of the road. They do not make homes in the city; they don't really make homes anywhere. A Nuwisha might pass through a city in its wanderings, and it might even be persuaded to help the local Garou out, or try to trade or sell them some knowledge, but it won't stay in the city for long.

Ratkin

"Rule One, hotshot. Do not fuck with the Ratkin. Rules Two through Ten are also: DO NOT FUCK WITH THE RATKIN! They are stone cold crazy and pissed off on a scale that you could see if you were watching from orbit."

—Grandfather Spinner, Bone Gnawer Galliard

While the other Fera must work to adapt to the cities, the Ratkin thrive in urban settings. Largely underneath the noses of the Garou, the Ratkin population, alone among all the Fera, grows. While still operating with fewer members than before the War of Rage, they are almost back to their pre-War numbers. In fact, the Ratkin generally outnumber city Garou, by a factor of anywhere from two to one to five to one. As yet, the Garou do not know this, though many Bone Gnawers suspect this to be true. The Gnawers keep their suspicions to themselves, as they fear that such knowledge in the wrong hands (say, the Get of Fenris, for instance) could easily lead to yet another War of Rage. The Ratkin themselves keep the Garou at arm's length, some feeling they both serve Rat herself, others remembering the War of Rage with the fire that only a Ratkin can stoke.

The Ratkin's historical task was to keep the human population in check, and thus preserve the balance between Weaver and Wyld. In the past, they used methods from plague to eating humans' food. In modern times, they balance their traditional duties with a healthy dose of self-preservation. All Ratkin worth their tails will happily die for their cause, but they rarely throw their lives away in futile gestures. Human suicide bombers baffle even the most hardcore Plague Lord. While they may respect the impressive body counts, they also see how such terror attacks solidify resistance and give even feuding parties a common enemy to destroy.



Having faced extinction once, they have no desire to repeat the experience.

The Ratkin intend to weather the worst of the war burrowed into the bowels of the greatest cities of the world, and come out triumphantly into the world that follows the Apocalypse. Certainly Ratkin elders realize that entire cities will be destroyed in the coming crucible, but they believe that the only creatures certain to survive the conflagration are cockroaches and rats — surely Ratkin nests in one or two cities will survive. Ratkin in cities trade with city Garou when they think they are likely to come out ahead in the deal, but they are almost never willing to be pressed into service in the Garou's quixotic war against the Wyrm.

Rokea

Rokea might spend time in human form down near the docks of large port cities, but those few Rokea who crave human companionship are more likely to find suitable companionship in small seaside cities. Rokea almost never enter cities to track down Wyrm or Weaver foes: they assume that land-dwelling Fera have that sort of thing well in hand. The Rokea have millions of cubic miles of ocean to defend, after all.

Pentex Corporations

Most Pentex subsidiaries only barely fall into the category of "supernatural threats." There may be Wyrm-cultists, Ferectoi or Black Spiral Dancers in the boardrooms of Endron or O'Tolley's, but you won't run into such beasts at the local gas station or burger hut. The supernatural taint that spreads through a subsidiary is a subtle thing, and many local franchises or plants strengthen the Wyrm through entirely mundane means. Such threats are best dealt with not by extending

claws and leaving a blood-smeared trail of wreckage, but by careful information gathering, sabotage and even legal action. Even urban werewolves find these tactics to be a strain on their patience, but the rules of urban survival demand it.

O'Tolley's

"Finger lickin' good!"

— Severen, *Near Dark*

Some economists on the Pentex payroll imagine an Endron gas station on every other corner in America. They generally don't realize that O'Tolley's beat them there years ago. American consumption of fast food has skyrocketed in the past thirty years. In 1970, Americans spent around \$6 billion on fast food. In 2000, they spent over \$110 billion. More than a quarter of that was spent at O'Tolley's — "the Family Place." If only they knew more about just what kind of family they were dining with.

Like King Breweries (see **Subsidiaries: A Guide To Pentex**), O'Tolley's doesn't go for the "flashy" stuff like "a Bane in every Burger." They prefer more subtle methods, and ones that don't attract as much attention. Not that it's expensive to replace a franchise after some homicidal shapeshifter decides to take it out. On the contrary, they use cheap building materials and pay their employees as little as they can possibly get away with. No, as the used car slogan goes, "How do they do it? Volume! Volume! Volume!"

O'Tolley's practices environmental and spiritual destruction on a grand scale. Every piece of the (scalding hot) pie is carefully considered to maximize the carnage they wreak. To start out, there's the meat. While more than a few franchises have been known to dispose of problems in the meat grinders, that's the exception to the rule. The meat (and meat byproducts) for the Family-Burgers is usually actual cow. Of course, these cows are often dairy cows that make poor meat. Some of the cattle live their whole lives in barbaric "food factories" where they never leave their "cell" or see the light of day. Others come from Third World countries, where grain that could be used to feed the hungry populace is instead fed to cattle. This grows even more staggering when one realizes it takes ten calories of grain fed to cattle to generate one calorie's worth of meat. And that isn't even counting the hit to the environment caused by clear-cutting rainforests to provide grazing room for the Third World cattle. All this, before the fillers and "flavor enhancers" get thrown in the mix, and then the

meat is chemically liquefied and then solidified again into more convenient forms. After the "fresh" (read "treated with chemicals and dyes") lettuce and buns are added to the mix, you are left with a high-fat, high-sodium, low-fiber, largely water nutritional nightmare that has as much food value as the paper it's wrapped in. (Editorial note: The details of the O'Tolley's burger have been only slightly exaggerated from the real-world fast food industry. Enjoy that quarter pounder!)

Following a small PR flap over the non-biodegradable Styrofoam containers they used, O'Tolley's switched back to paper. While they may claim to use recycled paper, only a tiny fraction of the millions of tons of paper used in packaging is actually from recycled sources. Consider that each piece of food in a "Family Pack" meal is individually wrapped. On average, most of the materials are used for only 10 minutes before being wadded up and thrown away. Multiply that small wad of trash by the millions of burgers sold worldwide daily, and it all adds up to an enormous waste.

The destruction levied on the environment by O'Tolley's is considerable. They also ruin human lives. While claiming to be a "family place," they manage to do their level best to replace actual family meals with their brightly packaged insta-foods that entice children to eat with Roley-Poley O'Tolley and his lovable gang of pals. Why eat at home with your parents when you can wolf down a "Power Meal" and then run and play in the brightly colored and air-conditioned playroom. Children learn not to pay attention to their food (easy enough, considering the quality), but instead to the toys that come with the food. Trips to O'Tolley's aren't about sharing a meal and the day's experiences, they are about completing a collection of cheap toys and jumping around in a smelly tub of plastic balls. Though the O'Tolley's Family Meals rarely contain Wyrm-taint in measurable amounts, by sheer volume, many fast-food addicts undergo a change similar to the goblins created by playing Black Dog Games (see **Subsidiaries: A Guide to Pentex**). This change occurs even more rapidly in the poor souls that work there.

Even without the risk of becoming a burgerman, employment at O'Tolley's is dangerous. The conditions barely meet meager government safety standards and payoffs are always easier than compliance. O'Tolley's pays minimum wage with no benefits to their workers, and spends large sums of money in Washington lobbying to keep that wage as low as possible. The assembly line nature of

Burgermen

Like the goblins, the transformation from human to burgerman is nowhere near as dramatic as becoming a full-blown fomori. Their powers rarely provide the poor slobs with any sort of edge when facing a Crinos Garou, but they can make small amounts of trouble, especially for Kinfolk investigating a franchise for their cousins. (And yes, burgermen are meant to be a fairly amusing, black comic relief sort of fomor. Use them only if you don't think they'll permanently damage your chronicle's mood — or if you just can't resist.)

• **Blasé:** The lack of thought required to work at O'Tolley's erodes the will of certain employees. Their Willpower score drops at a rate of one point per month. When their Willpower reaches 0, they become almost drone-like automatons, going through the motions of their lives without any sort of feeling. A side effect of this deadening is that they become next to impossible to intimidate or scare. An entire pack of slavering Red Talons can burst into a franchise, and the Blasé employee will ask if they want fries with that.

• **Collector's Frenzy:** As mentioned before, one of the many distractions from the poor quality of O'Tolley's food is the toy that come with the meals. The higher-ups at Pentex Central often cross-market other Pentex intellectual properties, such as Action Bill or Braney. These toys are the cheapest knock-off pieces of junk plastic Avalon Incorporated make. However, the plastic slurry used to create the toys is often the cast-offs from other, more sinister products. One common side effect of the toys is mild high, caused by exposure to large numbers of these gewgaws. Only by collecting more and more of these cheap playthings can the collector achieve the high. The cravings can become so intense that the addict can snap if denied the latest part of the "Braney Fun Pals" set. This effect is more pronounced in children. A ten-year old child in Paris, TN murdered his parents with a sharpened spork after his mother accidentally threw away his Action Bill collector's glasses. After this incident, Pentex Internal Affairs investigated and began a program of creating special "rare" toys in each line. These toys are 50% more likely to carry the collector effect. The simple desire for a complete set starts the burgermen on their dark road, but the special toys help ensure them becoming return custom-

ers. And of course, as an added bonus, they buy more burgers, which may leads to other addictions.

• **Hot Hands:** Working the grills and deep fryers inevitably leads to burns. After enough exposure to the tainted grease used by O'Tolley's, the burgerman learns to simply shut off his pain receptors. While his body feels (and shows) the effects of burns, the burgerman doesn't register the pain. As such, any damage done to them by fire does not cause wound penalties to their dice pools. A side effect of this is that, in order to feel actual heat, they frequently take scalding hot showers or drink boiling hot coffee. Following a lawsuit, managers at O'Tolley's now make a conscious effort (as much as they can) to keep their employees from serving scalding hot beverages to the customers.

• **Iron Stomachs:** After spending years (and thousands of dollars) shoveling down O'Tolley's burgers and fries, the burgerman gains immunity to ingested poisons. Later, as his digestive tract grows in strength and power, he is able to eat anything (the wrappers, the napkins, the bags, the straws, coworkers...). Many burgermen with this ability start out in O'Tolley's kitchens, eating the food leftover at the end of the day. After years of wrecking their insides, they develop "strange" cravings and desires. While O'Tolley's rarely serves human to humans, there are the occasional perks handed out to lifetime employees and special customers.

• **The Smell:** Working the grills causes the poor saps stuck in O'Tolley's kitchens to end the day covered in the smell of grease. It becomes next to impossible to get this smell out of their hair, clothes and skin. Eventually, the burgerman gives up. This makes him much easier to pick out of a crowd (-2 difficulty to track him by scent, and only a botch prevents anyone from noticing the smell). Additionally, this foul scent makes him equally unappetizing. Any successful bite attacks made against a burgerman with The Smell requires the attacker to make a Willpower roll (difficulty 7) or spend the next round gagging and spitting, trying to get the taste out of her mouth. Occasionally, on a botch, the attacker finds herself with strange cravings for O'Tolley's food.

O'Tolley's means that the workers learn no marketable or transferable skills, all in the name of ensuring that a FamilyBurger in Maine tastes just as awful as one in California. The lack of skills necessary to operate the Fry-A-Lator or the cash register (conveniently labeled by pictures of the food so even a sub-literate moron can operate it) makes these O'Jobs ideal for teenage workers. O'Tolley's claims that close to 10% of the American workforce get its first job with them. While the pay is great for a teenager living at home with their parents, it's not a living wage. But, unlike other jobs, working at O'Tolley's doesn't train workers for better jobs down the line. While many workers escape the O'Tolley's trap, the slick employee-management campaign indoctrinates the easily manipulated into thinking they're all one big O'Tolleys Family. They happily work double shifts, because it's for "The Family." Unions are discouraged by threats of firing and physical violence. Public dissent against O'Tolley's is quickly squelched by lawsuits and shouted down by a marketing juggernaut that makes sure that the Family Place's reputation is cleaner than their floors.

Safe Haven Construction & Hi-Quality Builders

Topic: Construction Phasing and Final Punch-List

>> Final utility coordination to be performed by 22.32.9921 without fail. OWNER notes that phase I of the Paindome Physical Plant project contained many errors and mismatches between civil and MEP services. OWNER further notes that pipe penetrations through firewalls in the previous project were sealed with the quivering bodies of the civil and MEP engineers. MEP and CIVIL agree to meet the schedule.

— Andy Solberg, Talk.bizarre

In the grand plans of Pentex, there is one small corporation that remains unappreciated by most of the higher ups in the company. This company doesn't get the "sexy" jobs like destroying the environment, unearthing ancient Wyrm entities, or turning Kinfolk children into serial killers. But, without the hard work and good, old-fashioned craftsmanship of Safe Haven Construction, none of the other faces of Pentex could get their work done.

Need a chemical processing plant with secret sub-levels for obscene rites, complete with Level 5-biohazard containment? No problem! How about a chip-manufacturing complex that must have cart paths arranged to mirror runes in the Pretanic Keys? Can do! Having problems with the runoff from the

abattoir in the Hive? SHC has plans ready for construction, with runoff valves guaranteed never to clog, or you can flay the architect!

While far from the top of the Pentex heap, the word around the cooler is that if you need something done, and done right, go to SHC. Many of the heads of the Pentex hydra dedicate themselves to doing one thing, and doing it in the worst possible way. They use inefficient nets to catch dolphins with the tuna. They create violent role-playing games that induce idiot players to kill themselves (or better, hated and envied rivals who aren't part of the customer-base). They use ten times as many resources as needed, just because part of the mission statement is to be wasteful. While cutting corners in safety standards and the fomori HMO save the company large sums of money, that very inefficiency is a weakness that costs them money and resources. Not so with SHC. What they build is built to last (unless it's supposed to fall apart, in which case, it does so on cue). It may ignore every safety regulation known to man (and other, less careful, species), but it will be built on time, on spec and, most importantly, on budget.

Now of course, SHC isn't an overt pit of Wyrm-ridden architects and the like; most of the workers, managers and other employees are simply the usual sort of quiet, unobtrusive, I-don't-care-what-company-policy-is-as-long-as-I-get-paid folks that companies love to hire. But as with most Pentex subsidiaries, it's upper management where you find the real story about the company's *true* goals.

CEO Eric Anderson started out designing plumbing systems for a New York City construction firm. After impressing a local crime-boss by his design of a safe house, the family rewarded him by putting him in charge of a front of theirs. His job was twofold. First, to launder the family's money and secondly, to design the homes of prominent family members (complete with the special "extras" they required). His work drew such attention in underworld circles that soon, another sort of underworld noticed him.

Anderson became the employee of a wealthy New Jersey Leech who was facing difficulties with a subterranean faction of vampires. Anderson's expertise with building design made the vampire's lair one of the most secure in America. Anderson profited, and his construction company, Safe Haven, grew wealthier. Soon, his firm had built over twenty individual havens, and three group havens. When hunters slew the vampire (away from his haven, mind you), Anderson was, briefly, free.

Pentex Division Director Ben Rushing, always in the lookout for new blood, approached him and made him an offer to join the Pentex family. Prior to the acquisition, Pentex facilities were notorious for their shoddy craftsmanship. While certainly fitting with the highest-level Pentex mission statements, it added an undesired level of chaos in the workplace.

Prior to the acquisition of Safe Haven, the majority of Pentex's building contracts went to Hi-Quality Builders, a shell company directly controlled by Pentex itself. Unlike the dark professionalism of SHC, HQB used inferior materials and employed a workforce of miscreants unlikely to get jobs anywhere else (and therefore willing to work for exceptionally low wages). Chris Tapiador, the manager of HQB, had a reputation as a habitual risk and, if not for his ruthlessness behind the scenes, would have likely been chum for the fomori vats. After Safe Haven's entrance into the Pentex community, Tapiador arranged for no less than three contracts on Anderson's life. However, Anderson had long been a player in the bitter and bloody wars that went on between vampires. He survived the attempts, and solved the dispute with a novel approach: a new business model.

In the past, HQB had only contracted out for specific Pentex building projects. With the new model, SHC took over the Pentex construction jobs, and, in return, HQB branched out into the home construction arena. Using Anderson's contacts and Tapiador's vast slush fund, HQB bought large tracts of suburban land. Using innocuous names like "Plantation Creek," HQB builds what, on the surface, appear to be good, low-cost housing, perfect for up-and-coming suburbanites hoping to escape the crime-infested cities. However, the HQB-built homes never seem to match the splendor of the model homes. (This comes as no surprise, as SHC crews build the models, and the HQB crews build the actual homes.)

Not only are these homes built on shaky foundations with cheap materials, but a small but significant fraction of the houses comes with a special "welcoming present": a Bane. These spirits grow fat on the frustration of the occupants, who learn far too quickly that their dream houses are more akin to nightmares. One section of tile cracks, and the owners learn that the make was discontinued and is impossible to match. The warranty covers cracks due to settling, but only ones above a certain, ridiculously large size. Toilets back up. Pipes burst at the first freeze. And the owners' rage and frustra-

tion feeds the Banes. In a few cases, the Banes decide to inhabit their tenants, prodding them to snap and kill their neighbors.

In a bit of cross marketing, these subdivisions often come with many other familiar names in the surrounding area. Fast-food restaurants are O'Tolley's. Herricks owns the corner markets, and fills them with Young and Smith products. The local gas station is, naturally, under the Endron label. Many higher ups watch these "planned communities" with great interest. While the sheer magnitude of Wyrm-taint is sure to attract unwanted attention, the scale on which these corrupting communities affect the immediate and surrounding locales makes them very interesting to management. Although they make easy targets, the large numbers of innocent bystanders makes them difficult to stop by frenzied assaults. Environmental-impact lawsuits take time and money, of which Pentex has plenty.

Weaver Corporations

Unlike the Wyrm, the Weaver has no need for a corporate avatar to do its bidding. The nature of the Wyrm itself is chaos, and must thus work through human agents if it wishes to have them work together. Essentially, by working as a unit, they work against their nature. Were it not for the strength of the Wyrm's overseers, and the willpower of the Pentex Board of Directors, the various factions of Pentex would fall on each other. The Weaver's servants do not have that particular problem. Because all Weaver spirits (and Drones) are linked through the Pattern Web, they have no need to create a unified corporate front. As a matter of fact, the various agencies of the Weaver work in perfect harmony, without ever needing to directly interact.

The exact nature of the controllers of these corporations is left for the Storyteller to decide. Each one might be run by Drones, or perhaps simply by humans with strong Weaver-taint who have no idea of the spiritual effect their businesses have on people. The frightening thing is that the hierarchy of Weaver-spirits probably never gave a direct order to create a single one of these establishments — they merely fell into step as needed.

Aunt Charlotte's Child Care

"So, what seems to be the problem with this little man?"

"Doctor, it's hard to say, exactly. He's not showing any real symptoms. He's attentive. Hell, he's better behaved than he was six months ago."

"I do remember a little monkey climbing on the sink."

"Exactly. He doesn't do that anymore. He just doesn't seem interested in much of anything. He doesn't explore like he used to. He still colors and plays with his airplanes. But he doesn't show interest in anything new. He's almost listless. Maybe it's Epstein-Barre?"

"Well, let me be the doctor here, Mrs. Goldberg. Have there been any major changes at home?"

"He started day-care last month."

"Oh, that's probably it. He's just adjusting to the new situation. Aren't you, Jimmy?"

"Yes, I am Doctor Greenfield. That is what I told Mother."

Aunt Charlotte's Child Care provides reasonably priced day-care for working parents. With the current state of the economy, most families rely on both parents working to support the family. However, affordable day care for infants and toddlers is difficult to find. Aunt Charlotte's has franchises across the country, and more opening every day. The caregivers have excellent training and the screening process is rigorous. Parenting magazines regularly trumpet the successes Aunt Charlotte's has had, even with "problem children," including a drop in cases of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. A line of toys and books is available in most department stores. While none too popular with children, parents find them irresistible.

All it really costs is childhood itself. Nowhere but in children does one find the spark of the Wyld burning so brightly in humans. While not as abrupt as outright possession, the procedures used by Aunt Charlotte's dull the Wyld side of children. Parents, often sleep-deprived and frazzled, enjoy the changes the Aunt Charlotte's Method brings about in their kids. They are more attentive. They sleep and eat on a regular schedule. They behave better. They tend to perform well in school. And yet, in a quiet moment, these parents wonder why they don't laugh as much.

In mechanical terms, these children are not Drones. They register within the human range when the Gift: Detect Weaver is used on them. However, one change is noticeable: Kinfolk children lose their "Kinfolk-ness." They lose that connection to Gaia. In fact, should a future Garou be raised in Aunt Charlotte's Child Care, they will never experience their First Change. Every three months a Garou or Kinfolk child spends in their care, they lose a point of Pure Breed. Once all of their Pure

Breed is gone, Garou lose the wolf, and Kinfolk become normal humans.

Pleasant Homes

"Hi honey, I'm home."

"That's nice dear, how was your day?"

"Nice. What's for dinner?"

"It's Thursday, so it must be meatloaf."

"Of course."

"Of course. Would you like to see the sweater I knitted for you?"

"Yes dear, that would be nice."

Pleasant Homes Planned Communities are sprouting up across America. These gated communities with strict landowner covenants are famous for being clean, safe and good places to raise a family. The ads always show immaculate lawns, tasteful layouts, stylish furniture and contented families. Indeed, demographic analyses of these subdivisions show that the families that live there tend to be more productive at work, do better in school, and live longer, healthier lives. Some critics say that these planned communities are elitist and that the landowner covenants are too restrictive. Members can even be evicted for not following the covenants or failing to pay dues. All pets, regardless of size, are forbidden. However, in unsafe times, the call of suburban safety sounds louder than the desire for personal expression. Anyway, to afford the high mortgage and property taxes, both parents end up working long hours and spending a lot of time in the car, commuting from suburbia to downtown, so they rarely have time to spend gardening.

When all is said and done, Pleasant Homes residents are content. They become more focused, and slip into the routine of work. Leisure activities center on the planned golf courses or group activities. Parents find themselves actually able to trust their neighbors, and let their children play in the streets. Indeed, all of the rough corners in their lives seem to just smooth over, so long as they listen to the beat of the Weaver thrumming through the dappled lanes. Pleasant Homes communities are crawling with Weaver spirits dedicated to making sure that those who live in their webs fit in and conform. Pesky details like individuality melt away. While living there is not a guaranteed ticket to becoming a drone, these neighborhoods do seem to be breeding grounds for the Weaver's human servants.

Covenant Spiders

Rage 5, Gnosis 6, Willpower 7, Essence 17

Charms: Calcify, Conformity, Domain Sense, Drain Gnosis

Conformity: Like the Bane Charm: Corruption (*Werewolf*, p. 239), the covenant spiders use this Charm to ensure that all who live in their domain obey the rules and conform. Generally, these suggestions are simple ones, like cleaning up the lawn, or making sure that the hedges are all uniformly cut. However, when certain individuals show resistance to the suggestions made by the covenant spiders, they have been known to incite others in the community against the "rebel." This usually leads to social ostracism, but has on rare occasion led to violence.

Background: Covenant spiders exist to ensure conformity among humans who live in the Pattern Web. They make sure that people leave for work at the exact same time every day. They tell the inhabitants to conform to the community standards, and blend in. Covenant spiders are all identical, and appear to be largely unthreatening creatures of porcelain, unless some person (or Garou) threatens the stability of their nest. Then, they become savage and attack (or incite others to do so).

Star-Marts

If we don't have it, you don't want it!

— Star Mart advertising slogan

In times past, people bought bread at the baker, meat from the butcher, and fruits and vegetables from a farmer's market. With the advent of the super-market, consumers could get all of their food in one place. Similarly, department stores pulled various small shops together into a singular hub of mass merchandising. The Star-Mart takes those ideas to the next level, a singular location where anything can be bought for an affordable price.

Star-Mart is the brainchild of Walter Starr, a Kentucky businessman who, according to his biography, *Vision of the Stars*, got the idea in a dream. He built the first Star-Mart outside of Louisville in 1997, with the help of a group of well-connected investors who provided him with all of the support (financial and otherwise) that he needed. The

merchandise was not high quality, but the price was right. Being able to buy a car, fill it up with groceries and drive it home (an initial marketing campaign) made it enough of a newsworthy attraction to draw national attention. People came in from all over the country to see the thousand and one services available at "the Big Star": from photo studios to dog grooming.

Star-Marts began popping up all over the country, each of them personally opened by Mr. Starr. His personable ways and folksy good-humor always seemed to drown out the complaints that began cropping up about Star-Mart business practices. Firstly, Star-Marts, with the national distribution network and macro-scale business model, quickly drove neighboring small businesses to ruin. While the corner Mom-and-Pop craft shop may have had a better selection than the "craft aisle" at Star-Mart, Star-Mart's prices were cheaper, and customers could get their hair cut while they were there. Unable to compete with a Fortune 500 powerhouse, the storeowners often lost their businesses and ended up working as minimum-wage employees of Star-Mart itself. A second problem with the enormous Star-Marts is the vast amounts of land necessary to house the mega-stores. Enormous chunks of undeveloped land get clear-cut and paved over. Roads big enough for the familiar red, white and blue trucks require more highway expansion and cause traffic snarls in the area.

But if that were all there was to it, Star-Mart would be just another enormous retail chain out to crush the competition. Star Mart has an advantage over the competition: the Weaver. The most well-connected investors are heavily tainted by the Weaver (and some are even Drones); they see Star-Marts as a tool towards simplification and unification of small towns. Starr himself is a completely normal human, unaware of the spiritual calcification done in his name. Every Star-Mart is the same, down to the blueprints. They sell the same products in Maine and Nevada, providing a uniform supply of retail goods and services to the public. Although the selection is lacking, the breadth of services keeps customers coming back. In today's fast-paced climate, most find it hard to resist the true ultimate in "one-stop shopping." With this, other merchants falter and even the loyal customers end up at a Star-Mart. The company's profits rise, and it is able to build more Star-Marts.

The Umbral neighborhood in Star-Marts is crawling with Pattern Spiders and thickly encrusted with the Pattern Web, so much that it almost bleeds through. Customers tend to follow the thick strands, going up and down every single aisle, even when they came for just one specific item. They rarely purchase just that, however. It always seems that there's the new (family-safe) CD by the bland pop artist or a toilet bowl cleaner the customer happens to need. There is, however, one very useful trait to the Pattern Webs of a Star-Mart: they are all connected. At special points in the store's Umbral environment, enterprising explorers can find what are being dubbed "Moon-Strands," special strands of the Pattern Web that act like Moon-Bridges. These Moon-Strands allow instantaneous travel between Star-Marts, and with Star-Marts all over North America (and soon opening worldwide), this can prove useful. However, these strands are not easily found or exploited. Guardian and Rail Spiders (see **Book of the Weaver**), guard these loci, and must be appeased before travel. It is not recommended that the spirits be overpowered for travel, as the Weaver spirits on the other end will immediately know of the attack and be ready to register their complaints. These Moon-Strands are becoming more numerous, leading to an unnerving theory among some Glass Walker Theurges: these stores are all becoming one, a singular point in space. Already, a few shoppers have noticed a "sameness" in the salespeople and customers – seeing the same person working the cash register in multiple stores, sometimes all the way across the country. Maybe it's just a coincidence, but many late nights around the caern, Theurges wonder what would happen if many physical places collapsed into one. Theories range from "nothing in particular" to the spiritual equivalent of nuclear fusion.

City Monsters

Not all of the threats to Garou in cities come from the large, recognized enemies. Not everything traces back to big bad Pentex. Indeed, the chaotic nature of the Wyrm itself leads to a lack of cooperation among its servants. Here is a selection of individual threats for Garou to face while in the concrete jungle.

Big Bad Rats

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4, Perception 4, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Abilities: Athletics 2, Brawl 3, Stealth 4

Willpower: 2

Health Levels: OK, -1, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Starlight Spiders

Rage 4, Gnosis 6, Willpower 6, Essence 16

Charms: Calcify, Craft Merchandise, Domain Sense, Information Link

Craft Merchandise: At the cost of two points of essence, Starlight Spiders can reshape items in the back rooms from one type to another. (As the Homid Gift: Reshape Object, but with consumer goods.)

Background: Starlight Spiders are specialized spider-spirits that live in the Umbra of Star-Mart locations. Their job is to ensure customers can always find what they need. They resemble Pattern Spiders, but appear decked out in the red, white and blue outfits Star-Mart workers wear. Many workers subconsciously know that, if a customer is in need of a certain out-of-stock item, they can search in certain corners of the storerooms and find just what they need. That is not to say that the Spiders can create any specific thing, but that can get the type of item in question. Say that a customer wants a pair of pants that are a certain size and style. The Starlights will take a coat in storage and transform it into a pair of pants that will fit, but won't necessarily be the "right" color. The items found will always be functional, if not fashionable.

Attacks: Bite (Strength +1), claw (Strength -1). Some BBRs are the result of exposure to Wyrm-tainted materials and their attacks do aggravated damage.

Image: These things are essentially the biggest, meanest, nastiest sewer rats this side of a Ratkin in Rodens — which they outmuscle. They're the size of small dogs, and seem unnaturally intelligent.

Background: Big Bad Rats come from numerous sources. Some have drunk vampire blood and grown strong on it. Others are mutations, caused by exposure to foul toxins (supernatural and biochemical). Still others are just the top of the food chain in the deepest, darkest pits under cities. No matter the origin, some of them occasionally make their way up into the surface world. Perhaps they got lost, they're hunting for food, or they're looking for a suitable mate. No matter the reason, when a pack of BBRs come to the surface, it's not good. One major problem with the BBRs is the differences of opinion on how to deal with them. Ratkin revere them, and do their best to court them as mates. Bone Gnawers



also try to protect them, either leading them back into their undercities or helping them find whatever it is they surfaced to find. This puts them at odds with other Garou, who see the BBRs as a threat to their protectorates and Kin.

Storytelling Notes: The arrival of a Big Bad Rat always leads to conflicts. Tribes split as to how to help or hinder these beasts. Tense relations between Tribes have boiled into open warfare, with Garou fighting Garou (or Garou fighting Ratkin). Player character packs may find themselves having to choose sides or try to broker a peace.

The Catcher

Breed: Homid

Faction: Hatar

Aspect: Agere (Myrmidon)

Physical: Strength 3 (6/7/0), Dexterity 2 (5/4/8), Stamina 4 (6/7/0)

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 3 (2/0/0), Appearance 2 (1/0/0)

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 2

Talents: Alertness 2, Athletics 2, Dodge 3, Intimidation 1, Primal-Urge 3, Streetwise 4, Subterfuge 2

Skills: Animal Ken 3, Craft 5, Drive 2, Science 4 (chemistry), Stealth 4, Survival 3

Knowledges: Computer 2, Occult 2, Rituals 3

Backgrounds: Allies 2, Contacts 3, Fylfot 2, Resources 2

Gifts: (1) Balance, Open Seal, Resist Pain, Resist Toxin, Web Haven; (2) Silencing Webs, True Fear; (3) Bug Lord, Weak Arm, Pulse of the Invisible

Rank: 3

Blood Pool: 10; **Gnosis:** 4; **Willpower:** 7

Rites: Guardians, Rite of Spinning

[For those without the Changing Breed Book *Ananasi*, here is a summary of the Gifts and rites that are dissimilar to Garou Gifts. Blood of Illusion: Poisonous bite induces hallucinations. Bug Lord: Summons a swarm of insects that can follow simple commands. Silencing Webs: Generates of webbing that can cover the target's mouth. Web Haven: creates a web, extending into the Umbra that acts as an alarm system. Guardians: Allows the Ananasi to animate the corpses of their victims to defend their Sylie. Rite of Spinning: Creates a Sylie, a place where the Ananasi can easily step sideways or communicate with other Ananasi.]

Fyfot: Web-Net (Level 2, Gnosis 6) — This Fyfot (fetish), which resembles an old-fashioned butterfly net, allows an Ananasi not only to generate webs while in Homid form, but can store up to 10 Blood Points worth of webbing in it.

Image: The Catcher dresses in comfortable work clothes, though since his First Change, he dresses more neatly. He is tall and skinny. His blond hair is cut in a mullet and is almost always covered by a Texas Rangers baseball cap. He always wears sunglasses, and is rarely seen without a cigarette. He speaks with a thick, Texan drawl, which generally leads people to believe he is an idiot.

Background: The Catcher started life as Rusty K. Grinnell in Huntsville, Texas. He was skinny, unpopular and more than a little weird. He didn't like the mandatory pastimes of football and beer. What he did like was killing bugs. Oh, his parents tried to get him to go hunting with the rest of the family, but he never cared for it. Where was the challenge with a gun? Any idiot can shoot a deer. Once, he made a trap out of barbed wire, but his father beat him and called him a "freak sissy-boy" for being "afraid of guns." After high school, Rusty worked for a local exterminator, and discovered his talent for it. He quickly became "The Vermin Slayer of Huntsville." At first, he used the traditional chemicals of the trade, but found it "lacked style" and constructed elaborate mechanisms out of scrap he found in junkyards.

Then, his true nature emerged. He was a maker of traps, a spinner of webs, and an assassin for Queen Ananasa. He quickly developed a second career: as a killer for hire. He silently slips into his target's life, maintaining his pretense of being a hick bug-killer. He scouts out his target, catches them, and kills them. He prefers to construct elaborate traps, made of equal parts supernatural webbing and machinery made out of junk. Once the target is caught, he moves in for a quick, bloodless kill.

As part of his calling, he will take on assignments against all sorts of targets. His reputation has spread among the movers and shakers of society, and those who need difficult targets eliminated (including Pentex officials or vampires) frequently call him. Of course, he also has been known to refuse assignments (or do others for free) at the request of his spider-queen.

Storytelling Notes: The Catcher sees himself as the ultimate predator. While he keeps the façade of being a hick exterminator from the Texas hill country, he is always watching and planning his next move. He likes to use his identity as an exterminator as cover to scout locations and blend into the background. His easy charm disarms people, and then it's too late.

CHUM

(Cannibal Humans/Underground Mockeries)

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4, Charisma 1, Manipulation 2, Appearance 0, Perception 4, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 2, Athletics 3, Brawl 4, Craft 4, Intimidation 4, Melee 2, Primal-Urge 2, Stealth 4

Willpower: 3

Health Levels: OK, -1, -1, -1, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Powers: Immunity to the Delirium

Image: CHUMs are bestial subhumans, dressed in rags (if anything). Under the layers of filth, their skins are pale from being constantly underground. They speak in a chattering, guttural language. Some Garou have noticed a vague similarity to the Pictish dialect spoken by Black Spiral Dancers.

Background: Every society has its outcasts. In modern times, they're called "homeless" (or worse). But even below that untouchable caste, there is a lower rung. Unable even to deal with the most basic parts of human society, these mad creatures migrate farther and farther down. Eventually, some of them encounter the things that make their homes beneath the earth. There are only so many of them that can be used for sacrifices, breeding stock or meals — the rest are sometimes kept as pets or set loose to wander in the dark places. Out of necessity, these feral humans form loose packs, living where no sane man would go, and rising up occasionally to find food or mates. (In tough times, they eat each other.) Bone Gnawers used to take pity on them, until one too many Kinfolk got eaten. Ratkin think they're hysterical and try to lead them (like rats in a maze) up to the surface to cause havoc.

Storytelling Notes: Despite the somewhat flippancy name, these creatures can be used to good

effect to play off the eternal fear of cannibalism, or as a modern equivalent to classic ghoul stories. Individual CHUMs are no match for a Garou. However, they know their subterranean lairs better than anyone (or anything) else. Their major advantage is that Garou, assured of their own superiority, are likely to underestimate them.

Freakers

"The one with the woman with the spiders in her hair?"

"Did it."

"How about the haunted house that had real cadavers as props?"

"Three Halloweens ago."

"AIDS-infected needles in coin return slots?"

"Used some goo I scraped off my shoe at the Hive, but yeah."

"Well, damn, do you just wanna drive around without headlights, and kill the first people who flash their lights back at us?"

"I guess. Nothing good on TV tonight."

One of the more enterprising packs of Black Spiral Dancers is the Generation Hex pack known as the Freakers. For years, people have told each other tales that "happened to a friend of mine." These stories were generally told as cautionary tales, usually with some not-so-hidden lesson at the core, like "sex is bad." With the growth of the Internet, these stories can spread with the speed of light, and become much harder to track. Even in the World of Darkness, most of these legends are just that: legends. However, a group of young Spirals looking for a creative way to make trouble decided that these tales were instructions for them. The alpha of the pack, Dot Bomb, believes that the urban legends that appear in her mailbox are, in fact, instructions from Sykora, the Urge of Paranoia. By taking these legends that were once believed and then disproved by skeptics, she believes that she can make the already scared and uneasy denizens of the World of Darkness even more paranoid.

The Freakers are all, to some degree, computer literate (except T'Lexlon), and spend most of their free time surfing the web for the best legend to make real. They started with the easy ones, like the Man with the Hook on Lover's Lane. Once they knocked out the ones that were easily accomplished by simple slaughter and mayhem, they started to get creative. They put venomous snakes in the ball-pits at fast-food restaurants. They let alligators loose in city sewers. They poisoned Halloween candy. To this day, they travel from city to city, spreading paranoia and fear.

The Freakers are:

- **Dot Bomb (Rank 3 homid Black Spiral Dancer Galliard):**

For a Black Spiral, Dot is very techno-savvy. However, any and all "Glass Walker" jokes are met with a swift claw to the genitals. While mad (in an obsessive/compulsion fashion), she is quite focused and linear for a Spiral. Her biggest problem is that they've done most of the really cool urban legends, and are starting to repeat themselves, using variations on a theme. She feels that this is a sign of Sykora's displeasure with her. (Starting a legend and then enacting it is considered "cheating.") Recent events have led to a flood of new legends, though it is somewhat more difficult for the Freakers to actualize them. When not leading the Freakers, Dot writes email viruses and trolls Usenet newsgroups, picking flame wars. Dot is short and very plain. However, that does not stop her from dressing in outrageous, revealing clothes a size too small.

- **Simlac (Rank 2 metis Black Spiral Dancer Galliard):**

Simlac believes that he is the Wyrm's gift to women (and men, he's not choosy). He has been blessed with stunning looks (especially considering how inbred he is) and a gift of gab. His metis deformity is his lack of a tail. Splat claims this is why he chases so much of it, to make up for his... loss. His role in the pack is to seed the ground with the stories they are going to enact. If they need to lead a young virgin out to Lover's Lane, where the Escaped Mental Patient can eviscerate her, he quickly sniffs one out and talks her up there. Just before T'Lex rips her legs off, he points out it's her fault — "Doesn't she watch horror movies?"

- **Artful Splatter (Rank 2 homid Black Spiral Dancer Ragabash):**

Splatter and Dot were the first two members of the Freakers. Splat claims to be part coyote, but frankly, nobody cares. However, he is a talented burglar, and does most of the breaking-and-entering needed to set up their elaborate schemes. Splat's other role is T'Lex's "keeper." He is the only one strong enough to hold onto his chain when T'Lex is in full rage, and fast enough to keep up with him when T'Lex does break free.

- **T'Lexlon (Rank 2 metis Black Spiral Dancer Ahroun):**

T'Lex (as the others call him) is a hopelessly retarded warrior, whose only real use to the team is that he provides them with much needed muscle. Most of the time, the Freakers keep him chained up at whatever dump they are using as a headquarters. He's likely to wander off and cause massive amounts of carnage unless they do this. He



doesn't mind, and happily watches trashy talk shows while shackled. When they take him into the field (he loves being "Hook Guy"), Splat keeps him on a retractable leash. Rumor around the Hive is that he's Dot's cousin, but nobody is willing to ask Dot and Spiral lineage from that particular Hive is hard to establish either way.

• **Steve:** Steve is the unofficial fifth member of the Freakers. He is Kinfolk and a budding fomori after accompanying the Freakers down into a "no-Kin" level of a Hive. Steve is Simlac's half-brother. Simlac initially convinced Dot to bring Steve along to do all the scutwork for the pack. He was to drive the van, steal supplies, bury bodies, etc. However, all of the Freakers were impressed with Steve's imagination and mechanical abilities. He builds most of the elaborate devices and gadgets that the pack uses in their escapades. He has even suggested a few plans (and only been thrashed for it once or twice). After their years together, Steve is considered an honorary member of the pack, "a

sidekick." Steve is tall and stocky, with big beefy hands that can perform amazingly delicate technical work. Steve's growing mutation is the Eyes of the Wyrm, which he usually keeps covered with large sunglasses. However, the pain of the mutation has led Steve to take larger and larger doses of heroin. This is affecting his concentration and his work. He, correctly, believes that if he should lose his utility to the group, that he will die. He is working on a plan to escape the pack, and is searching for asylum somewhere. He has vast knowledge, not only of the Freakers, but also of Black Spiral Hives across America.

Tower Guardians

I-10, between Houston and Beaumont...

"Daddy, what's that big tower with the lights for?"

"Well, Jackson. Those are used for radio transmitters."

"Al, I thought they were for airplanes — something with their instruments. Or was it cell-phones?"

Radio Elementals

These spirits manifest as a dark spot in the air. They are easy to detect as they emit a loud static.

Willpower 3, Rage 6, Gnosis 4, Essence 13

Charms: Blast (sonic), Short Out, Swift Flight

Tower Guardians

These spider-spirits defend the Weaver's outposts in the wild. They are large, metallic spiders. Their appearance generally mirrors the purpose the tower is used for. Power Tower Guardians hum with electricity. Radio Tower Guardians crackle like static. The Guardians' limbs end in tools, used to construct and maintain their tower. However, these tools can just as easily be used to defend their homes against all that would prey on them. Tower Guardians work in packs of powers of two (two, four, eight, sixteen...). As all are equal in the Weaver's eyes, these packs have no leader. They act as one.

Willpower 7, Rage 9, Gnosis 5, Essence 21

Charms: Blast (as appropriate), Calcify, Materialize, Solidify Reality

"I don't think so, sweetie, they've been there longer than cells have."

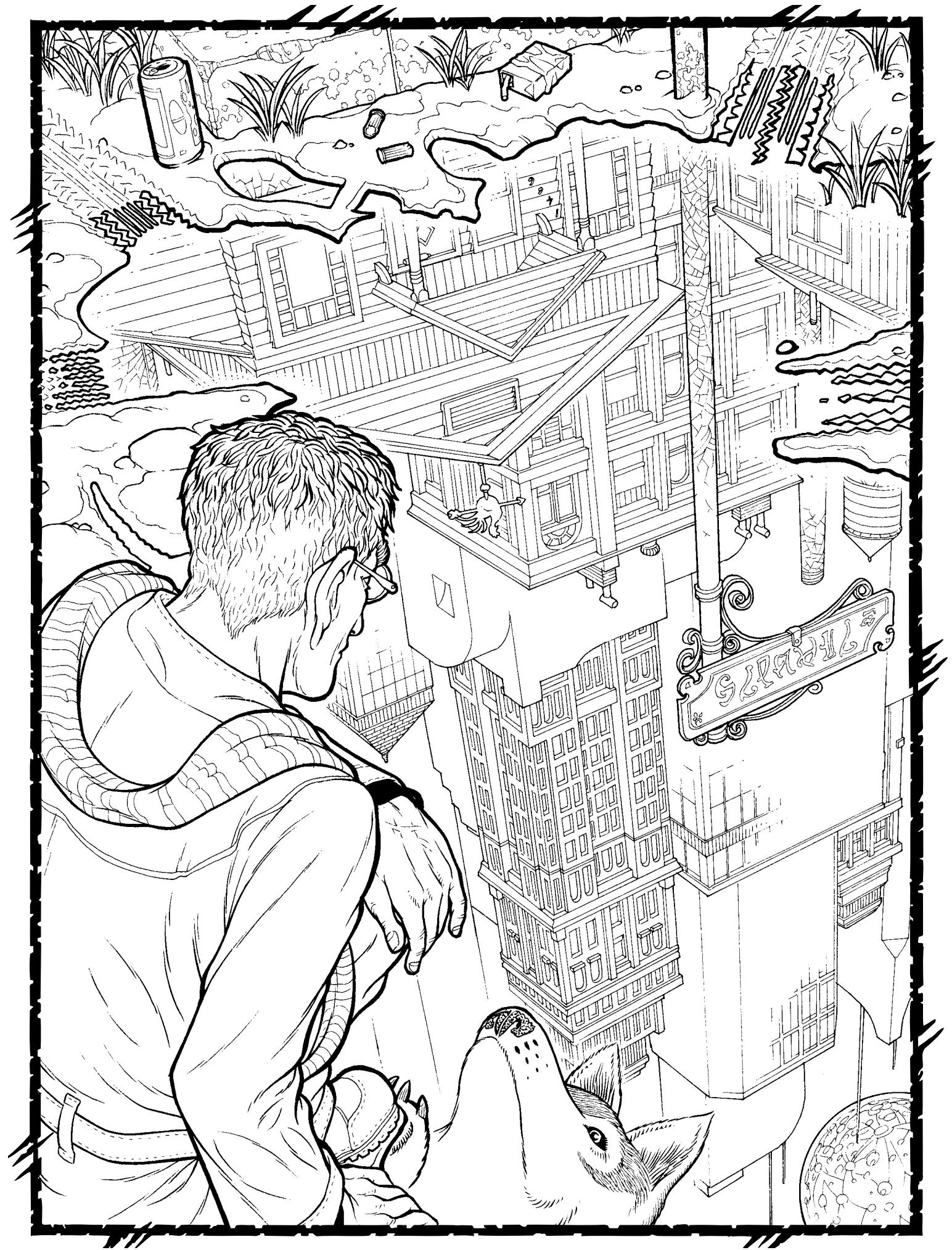
"Which is it, Daddy?"

"I don't know. But I promise when we get to Grandma's house I'll look it up online."

Out in the mostly undeveloped lands between cities, enormous metal towers sprout up. Alone or in "forests" of metal, connected by thick cables or electromagnetic waves, these monuments to the Weaver cut through the wild places, acting as seeking tendrils of the Pattern Web. The Gauntlet is higher near these towers, usually by at least two levels. In the Umbra, they are made not of metal but of the Pattern Web itself. Electricity elementals flit between the poles, traveling on telephone or power lines. (When traveling along wires like this, they possess the Charm: Swift Flight.) Radio or cell towers are frequently associated with radio elementals that dart around at fantastic speeds.

These towers are also home to many Pattern Spiders, as well as other members of Spider's Brood. As these idols to the Weaver's power frequently attract the attention and ire of the Wyld's defenders, Tower Guardians guard them with an ever-increasing frequency.





Chapter Three: The Neon Web

"Encoded in this city's stones are symbols thunderous enough to rouse the sleeping Gods submerged beneath the sea-bed of our dreams."

— Alan Moore, From Hell

Smog and Mirrors

Welcome to the City. Nothing small happens here. Here, where people live on top of people and under people and squashed side by side with people who see and hear and smell the same things and work the same way, things happen big — because they're happening to everyone all around, too. Lose your job? So did another 5,000 workers, all with identical pink slips. Kid scored in the 80th percentile on mandatory school testing? Congratulations, that's one bright kid you've got there, and she'll never lack for smart friends when you translate that top 20% into thousands of kids. You can't even die in peace without somebody dying right before or right after you, or worse yet being born in that messy, noisy way that babies have. They say that being in a Small Town is like living under a microscope. Well, life in the City is lived on a big screen TV, with a million Nielsen families tuned in round

the clock. The best and worst of humanity are magnified, dramatized.

Now step sideways. Welcome to the Urban Umbra. Now you're standing with your nose pressed up against that giant TV screen. All you see is pixels — little tiny bits of the huge show going on, impressions of emotion and action. You can learn a lot from studying the pixels, and you can learn a lot from backing up to see the whole picture; it's all just a matter of finding a place to stand.

Last but not least, never least, add in the Weaver. Just as the City is a home for people, it is also a home for the Weaver — her only natural home on Earth. Never forget that: Both halves are equally important. Without the Weaver, or without the people, there would be no City. They grow stronger together. Every time an alarm clock rings,

a spider gets its legs. The Weaver's web shores up busy interstates and humming computer networks, and draws strength and purpose from their frantic yet orderly activity.

Yet the City is not an insectile utopia. Is the wild side of human nature untamable, pushing up like weeds through concrete? Does the Weaver smother her charges in safety and regimen? Why are there poverty, crime, pollution, and what feeds on them, or fans the flames?

When you've seen all there is to see in the "real" world, step into the Umbra. Take a look at the big picture, the little pictures — hey, flip through the channels if you like the metaphor. Chances are you'll find what you're looking for here. Just take my advice and don't ever stand still too long.

Mapping the Subconscious: Navigating the Umbra The Penumbra

The Penumbra is the spiritual reflection of the Earth. Some poetic traditionalists call the Umbra the Velvet Shadow, but I guarantee that you won't find much here to put you in mind of velvet, unless maybe you step sideways in the garment district or a whorehouse. A Penumbral city is made of glass, concrete and metal — and webs.

Stepping into the Penumbra brings you to the exact same place, the spirit analog of the place you left. Getting through the Gauntlet in the city is tough — never count on hopping easily back and forth between worlds. Walking three blocks in the Penumbra gets you three blocks in the physical world, a mile gets you a mile, and running in circles for five minutes will waste exactly five minutes of your earthly time. There's a paucity of Gaian spirits there, or spirits of the Wyld, so assume everything you see is spawned of Weaver or Wyrmling and therefore probably hostile and downright deadly.

That's the ten-cent tourist guide to the urban jungle that they feed cubs around the campfire. Can't blame them, really, they don't know any better. But if you're going to actually live here in the city, you'll need to know more about what it's really like — or you'll die here in the city.

First Impressions

Now, I can guess two of the first things that will pop into your mind when you step to the other side. One is, "where did everybody go?" and the other is

"who turned out the lights?" We'll look at the people problem first.

You already know that people, animals, and objects that don't verge on antiques usually don't show up in the spirit world under their own power. What's catching you by surprise is the sudden absence of thousands of people — when you reach for the Umbra in the middle of the woods, you're missing maybe a handful of birds and squirrels, and there might even be some bird-spirits or squirrel-spirits around to make up for the loss. People who do have a reflection all their own are in some way spiritually profound, whether it's because they are deeply religious, creative geniuses, genuinely insane or some other reason. These people are fortunately rare — fortunately, because they tend to attract a lot of trouble, the way they stick out in the Penumbra like a sore thumb with an attached lightning rod. On the other hand, there's plenty of room in the city for a lot of a rare thing, so don't be surprised to see more humans than you expected shining right through the Gauntlet.

After you've been here a while, you'll start to notice that there's something special about people in groups. Take a group of everyday people whose deepest thoughts concern beer or hairstyles, and give them something to do. Individually you'd never spot these people in the Penumbra, but if they're interested enough in what they're doing as a group, they'll start to gather energy that eventually coalesces into a reflection of that group. You can't pick the individuals out of it, but you can see, or smell, or feel that there's a group present, and get a general idea of what they're up to. This phenomenon is most pronounced with groups that are either large or passionately involved — a big enough holiday mall crowd might show up even if everyone's supporting capitalism in their own special way, but the presence of a much smaller number of people vigorously protesting globalization will be just as strong, if not stronger. Groups with a potent enough Penumbral echo can even spawn appropriate Epiphlings. Whirling dervishes of lust might spill out of a strip joint (watch out, or you might wake up in the gutter with no Gnosis wallet), or little glowing balls of faith drift up from the gathered faithful at Sunday morning church services. Regular events like these (if the unfoldings of the spirit world can ever be considered regular) often attract predators — watching Wyrmlings gobble up

Epiphlings as they float out of a sanctuary is enough to make any werewolf see red.

Yes, it happens, just like chimps stuffing down swarming termites or any other display of animal devouring you might catch on Nature TV. The Penumbra is just as alive in the city as it is out in the sticks — just as alive as the physical world. Remember, the Weaver wrote the rules that nature lives by, and part of those rules is that ecological niches get filled. There are predators and prey, food chains and territorial fights. Once you've gotten over looking for things that aren't here, you'll start to see what is here. The Weaver's spider hench-spirits do their best to keep everything neat and tidy and contained, but following her own rules, spirits move in and do their thing. You'll see cats, bats, coyotes, rats, more insects than you can shake a stick at, elementals...I could go on, but you get the idea. So long as a spirit doesn't start trouble, the Weaver's goons usually leave it alone. Of course, some spirits, most especially Wyld ones, just can't help but cause trouble — just like most werewolves.

The nature spirits you'll see aren't at all a part of the physical world — that is to say, the cat-spirit you happen across in a Penumbral alley isn't the soul of Fluffy from Apartment 510. It's an "ideal" cat, a representation based on the concept of a city cat. They aren't all the same, since the ideal cat changes with the situation. Those few people you happen to see through the Gauntlet will essentially be wearing their hearts on their sleeves — whatever the nature of their spiritual awareness, it will show itself loud and clear. After all, they don't have any idea there's anything to hide, let alone the knowledge necessary to conceal it. Those humans who do have reflections, and the knowledge and skill to alter them — yes, those same bastards with a talent for sucking caerns dry to fuel their double-damned rituals — even they can't completely hide their spiritual nature in their Penumbral forms. A careful werewolf can pick up clues to their true nature with some study — but then again, a careful werewolf is probably not one who tails a Namer for too long.

Buildings that have acquired their own Penumbral presence look pretty much the same as they do in the physical world, with some minor but important differences. A building that has seen a lot of misery or crime will seem dark and forebod-

ing, or even rotted and foul — and yes, it can be a hazard to walk through, no matter how sturdy the place is back on Earth. Even if the whole building doesn't take up the taint of whatever horrible acts took place, the directly affected areas will. A tenement that only seems slightly creepy may have an apartment bedroom with a blood-soaked floor — ghostly bloodstains don't just wash out. On the upside, a house that has been cared for and seen families grow and thrive will be sturdy, clean and bright in the Penumbra. With enough time and reinforcement of their positive or negative qualities, a few of these remarkable edifices may become urban (or suburban) Glens or Blights, giving shelter to sympathetically aligned spirits. As might be expected, though, any Wyld-spirits spawned by such a Glen aren't made to feel welcome when they step out the front door.

Other buildings are made visible in the Penumbra by the influence of the Weaver or her followers — no, not her spiders, humans. Any building where people live — and by live I mean eat, sleep, have sex and hang up their toothbrushes, not sit behind a desk and push buttons — has at least a faint spiritual presence. The walls of these places are more like ephemeral curtains, and they may not even be completely opaque. They are, at best, placeholders, evidence that a sentient being considers this spot to be important; they are also evidence of the great power the masses of humanity have inherited from their spidery godmother.

The Weaver plays a more direct role in the production of other Penumbral buildings. Office complexes, industrial parks and other structures dear to Her heart that lack the spiritual oomph to have a reflection on their own are recreated by the Weaver's minions. Sometimes they too are only empty ephemeral shells of webbing, plastic and glass, put in place to make the Penumbral city pleasingly symmetrical with the physical world. Other times they are functional buildings, with solid walls and floors, office furniture, and the finest "network" that money can't buy. These buildings, along with other important commercial or administrative buildings that have pulled themselves across the Gauntlet by their bootstraps, are often occupied by spirits of all sizes, all busily doing their jobs. If their jobs are important, the building will be well defended, and visitors won't be welcome past the impressive front lobby.

Solid Floor or 30 Story Drop?

So, when a Garou steps sideways into the Umbra from a penthouse, what are the odds that her feet land in spidery shag carpet versus thin air? Figure that 10 to 25% of a city's buildings have the spiritual cachet to manifest themselves solidly in the Penumbra — stick with the low number if the city is young and/or shallow (Las Vegas) and hit the high end of the range for an ancient city with a rich heritage (Rome). Another 30 to 40% of the buildings will be reproduced by Weaver-spirits complete with floors and load-bearing members. The rest may be nothing more than mirages that fill out the skyline but aren't present in any other way, if that much. That adds up to a good chance that the intrepid werewolf will be doing her Wile E. Coyote imitation. Look before you leap.

The caveat is that any building that's important enough to catch the Weaver's attention and attract those meddling Garou is probably important enough to have floors. It's always the Storyteller's call, but the Storyteller should remember that falling through buildings all the time is not fun, while the occasional surprise long step will keep both characters and players from assuming they can just reach between the worlds wherever they want. And doesn't a death-defying, stunt-filled fight on a webbed floor that's barely holding up sound like fun?

Now, for the easy question: what's up with the lights? In a big enough city, you'll find that there is often more light during the day than the night, no matter what phase of the moon. There's a simple reason — Penumbral sunlight is ambient, emanating from everywhere and nowhere. Every alley, every closet, every dumpster is stuffed with light; it's not as bright as real daylight, but it's there. It's the ultimate task lighting — no pesky shadows anywhere. In the wilderness, the visual result is usually an idyll awaiting a postcard photographer. Within city limits we've got a few good angles for the shutterbugs, but just as often the effect is sterile and cold, or simply reveals piles of crap that are just unappealing. The city by moonlight is beautiful, where the moonlight can reach. Luna still makes a personal appearance in the nighttime sky, so her light shines down. This

leaves those parts of the city beneath towering skyscrapers and blankets of smog without light. As cities sprawl ever larger in both the Gaia realm and the Penumbra, pollution worsens, and the buildings seem to encroach even more on the open sky with architecturally impossible overhangs and strange screens which serve no purpose — except to block out the moon's light. The denizens of the city have begun to adapt; some manage a dim glow that gives the streets a surreal, Cousteau-like deep-sea vibe, while others (notably electricity elementals) can put an arc lamp to shame when they've a mind. We Garou are also adaptable, and come up with all kinds of workarounds — dedicated flashlights, keen senses, or firefly spirits in a jar. It's not that the darkness is really a problem: it's not being able to see Luna (and recharge the Rage batteries) that throws off some werewolves. If you're so easily rattled in the Penumbra, all I can say is: watch out for the Near Umbra.

Navigation and Hazards

Drinks-From-Klein-Bottles looked over at the cubs. "All right, you don't get it, I'll try to give you an example. Most of you got to basic geometry in school, before your First Change, right?" The cubs nodded, though two of them looked worried at the suggestion that being a werewolf might involve any math at all. The older Glass Walker scratched with a claw on the dirt, making half a circle, with a line underneath it. "The half-circle there is π over two times the length of the line. Okay, it's about one and a half times the length of the straight line. Everybody pretty much agree with that?" The cubs nodded.

"But," Klein added, "for every point on that line, there's a point on that circle." He traced straight lines up from the heavy line to the semicircle. "And for every point on the circle there's a point on the line." He traced lines downward. "So there's the same number of points! But the semicircle's longer! How? Well, the answer would bore you even more than you're bored right now, but remember this: When the Weaver wants to, she can cram more stuff into a space than ought to fit there."

The Penumbra is a reflection of the Gaia realm, that is without doubt. But in recent years, we urban full-timers have been encountering discrepancies, for lack of a better word, in the previously seamless fit between the worlds. There are places in the heart of the Weaver's power that have been tucked away, pockets of extra-space that have no direct correlation to the physical world.



Neither the Bone Gnawers nor the Glass Walkers have been in a particular hurry to inform the other tribes of this new development. There's no sense, we figure, in getting the Nation all hot and bothered about this until we can put together a nice five-point presentation on what's going on. And, to be honest, right now all that we know is that it's not theoretically impossible. Word is starting to get out, however, mostly because guys like me keep telling guys like you in the hopes that you don't wander into trouble.

There are competing theories about how she manipulates the Pattern Web into these extradimensional spaces, which I won't even get into; it's way over my head. The whys are easier to posit, even if trying to second-guess an insane over-goddess is doomed to failure. Why are we finding these spaces now? Well, maybe we just weren't looking in the right places before. As cities get larger and the wilderness smaller, more Garou are choosing — or being forced into — living on the Weaver's turf. Perhaps it's simply a case of more eyes to catch anomalies, and better communication to share the discoveries. Or maybe it is actually a new development, a sign that she has reached a new level of power. The theories we are exploring don't preclude the existence of this kind of folded space in the Gaia realm, either. And we aren't willing anymore to assume that she hasn't folded and spindled the physical world just because we haven't seen it yet.

Why do these extra-spaces exist? First, they're great places to hide things. Safely ensconced within that hidden space you may find a gate to the Scar or the CyberRealm, vast datastores, or pulsing Gnosis batteries. Or you might find nothing more important than a building, something old and once important that the Weaver or her minions can't or won't tear down — an architectural knick-knack, if you will — that was once located on real estate that has since been put to other uses. The cosmic forces of order seem to prefer that the Penumbra *appears* to be an accurate reflection of the mundane side of the Gauntlet, even if they have to bend the laws of physics to do it. I have seen one of these Penumbral historic sites: the original immigrant processing center on Ellis Island, destroyed in the physical realm by a fire, but still tucked away in a side pocket of the island's reflection. The building was only in use for five years before it was destroyed — imagine the strength of the American Dream, all the hope and courage that poured into

that building from the foundation to the shingles to make it so vital and alive in such a short time. The fact that the Weaver is consciously or unconsciously preserving such monuments for the world is, I think, cause for hope.

So, how do you know when you've found one of these little hideaways? First, you'll never just wander into one, unless you make a habit of poking your nose in places it doesn't belong. At least for now, the extra-spaces are hidden off the beaten path, behind doors or restricted-access hallways. You'll know if you step through one, too — there is no Gauntlet to speak of, but there is a wrenching feeling in the pit of your stomach as you step over the threshold. Local spirits will probably be aware of the existence of the extra-space, even if they don't know exactly where it is. Once you know that there's one in the area, it's only a matter of time until you find it — assuming you don't attract too much attention to yourself, that is. You can study the ebb and flow of spirit energies, or suss it out from the behavior of spirits in the area, or if you're really hard up you can just walk through every door and down every corridor until you find it.

Chances are you'll never encounter an extra-space in the city, unless you go looking for it. What you should concern yourself with more is not getting lost, period. It's easy enough for our rural cousins to get lost in the city streets of hard reality. It's even easier in the Penumbra, where landmarks may look different and handy street signs are nowhere to be found. It's not so easy to ask directions, either. It's not that it's so hard to find a spirit willing to be helpful, so much that they get around in the city in ways that you might find... uncomfortable. Do you really want to have to follow a rat-spirit into the sewers to get where you're going, when you could have just spent a little more time with a map before you stepped sideways? I didn't think so.

All is not necessarily lost if you wander astray, however. Thanks to the Weaver's need for organization, there are "signposts" in the Penumbra, too. Informational geomids — little Weaver-spirits that usually appear as solid shapes — are placed at intervals throughout the city. These spirits are networked together, to share information with each other and with central servers. Other Weaver spirits check in as they go past, getting updated directions and orders. The geomids are not averse to providing information to Garou with Spirit Speech

or other spirits who seem to be well behaved and orderly — dispensing information is their job, after all. But if you want to get anything more than a "You Are Here" X out of them, you'll need a fetish computer as an interface. If you're good with that computer, you may be able to get a detailed map of the area, including any extra-spaces; current security alerts; perhaps even upcoming building plans or your current bank balance. The information you get may not be easily immediately useful. Coordinate systems may change from something sane like latitude and longitude to something wacky like picospaces from the International Date Line at some bizarre administrator's whim. All requests for information are logged, but that's not a problem unless there's recently been significant werewolf-oriented conflict. And, of course, violence against the informational geomids or their network brings nearly instant retaliation by attack geomids (there's nothing more embarrassing than being beaten up by a vicious cone shape), or Weaver spiders.

You'll be walking, or running, of course. There is no personal or mass transit in the Penumbra — at least none that's reliable, anyway. Keep this important rule in mind: If it moves, it's alive, at least after a fashion. Sure, I've heard that ephemeral subway cars in London's tubes and Boston's T lines occasionally show up at the stations. Elsewhere, Rail-Spiders scuttle along the tracks. But stepping into one of those things would be like crawling right down its gullet, which is not something I'm personally willing to do. Not to mention that it's not like they stick to any kind of schedule. If you need to smuggle some people in a hurry, it is possible to perform the Rite of Spirit Awakening on a car, and have someone drive the car in the physical world while the rest of you pile into the spirit reflection like clowns. While it works, it's supremely disorienting and also undignified — it gets lots of spirit attention, often the aggressive kind.

Speaking of cars, you'll want to stick to the sidewalks even in the Penumbra where the concrete looks wide-open and inviting. Believe it or not, cars and trucks can still be a hazard, if their spirits are awake, or even semi-aware. You've all seen an awakened car, trust me — even if you didn't know it. It's a syndrome most prevalent in the United States, but everywhere car buffs are present, there it is. The most noticeable symptom is the "named car": for years, only guys named their cars, putting fleets of Sallies and Trixies on the road. Now, empowered women buy their own cars with their

own hard-earned cash, and feel entitled to name them things like Chet or Adonis. With enough detailing, waxing, and fuzzy seat covers, these half-ton hunks of steel and plastic gather up some sense of self, and become the terrors of the Penumbral highways. You're right — if getting hit by a car isn't going to kill you in the "real" world, then it isn't going to kill you in the spirit world either. But don't say I didn't warn you when you find yourself sprinting for the median with a pack of classic cars out for a Sunday spin on your heels, or, worse yet, with an imprint of the word "MACK" on your rump courtesy of an 18-wheeler named Betty Lou.

It is possible to travel along the Pattern Web, but it's not an option available to cubs. It's an option rarely made available to city-savvy cliath and fostern, and then only through the use of talens or fetishes. The Pattern Web is the underlying structure for both the physical world and the Umbra as far as any Garou has dared to travel and return. In a way, it's like going backstage during a play in order to re-enter on the other side of the stage. Glass Walkers and Theurges of sufficient rank have access to a Gift that allows them to sense the Pattern Web and climb around on it without coming under attack from the spider spirits that are omnipresent among the strands. Those without such advantages can still search out and even walk on the Pattern Web, but the footing is treacherously slick in some places and impossibly sticky in others — not to mention the nearly instant assaults by increasingly powerful spiders. For most Garou, the Pattern Web is only worth the effort of travel if you've got a long way to go and no access to a moon bridge.

One last word of warning about the nature of the Penumbra: Be careful what you destroy. The worlds may be sundered, but they are still linked in ways that are difficult to understand, but easy to observe. You can use these links to your advantage with caution: crushing the appropriate geomids can make it easier for your buddy on the other side to hack into a computer system, but crushing the wrong ones might completely corrupt the files he's looking for. Repeatedly cutting the cables to the Penumbral penthouse elevator makes it just a matter of time until the physical cable snaps, but it's impossible to predict exactly when. On the other hand, when the fur starts to really fly in a Penumbral dust-up, you can still end up endangering real people even though you're sparing them the Delirium. A dying Bane spews toxin all over the area; on the other side, people die from undiagnosed illnesses. A

clumsy Crinos kicks over a fire hydrant; in the mundane world, the hydrant malfunctions during a three-alarm apartment building fire. Yes, sometimes you have to fight, but don't just assume that the problems you cause in the Penumbra will take care of themselves. Weaver-spirits fix things, but they're busy things with assigned jobs and very little independent initiative. File a damage report yourself at the nearest geomid signpost if you have to; you'll earn some brownie points with your local Weaver allies, and maybe save some lives in the process.

Domains

In the Penumbra, a Domain is an area that acts as a conduit to and from a Realm in the Near Umbra. The spiritual energy pours through the connection, filtering through the Gauntlet into the corresponding area of the physical world. They are different from extra-spaces, which have no deeper Umbral connections and are maintained solely by their connection to the Pattern Web. There are countless permutations of Domains, just as the Realms of the Near Umbra defy mapping and enumeration. Many are ephemeral even in a world of ephemera — bizarre dream manifestations called chimares, epiphs devoted to the endless investigation of a single concept. Others are channels for the energies of the Triat and Gaia; they are far more comprehensible, but also quite possibly more dangerous.

We'll start with the easy one: Wyldings. I have never, never seen a Wylding anywhere near a city, and I wasn't born yesterday. If I saw one, I would grab my digital camera, shoot some video, and then run for it — far too many things in the city are liable to explode.

Glens are manifestations of Wyld and Gaian energies. They are rare, but not as rare as you might fear — most cities have at least one, even if it is forced to pop around town like a panicked mole. I sometimes wonder if the Weaver's constant campaign of harassment doesn't backfire by driving Gaian and Wyld energy together that would normally spread itself around. Glens provide solace to all manner of spirits, and soothe the souls of humans in the Gaia realm. No, Glens aren't particularly dangerous in and of themselves, you're right, but there is danger associated with them. They come under attack from technospiders and Banes with unsurprising frequency. The defense of local Glens is a high priority for urban septs, second only to the defense of the caern itself. Also remember that

Game Mechanics for the Penumbra

- **Finding an extra-space:** The player rolls Perception + Enigmas or Wits + Streetwise to search for an extradimensional space. The first method might involve studying the hidden messages in the patterns of the floor and ceiling tiles, while the second method might include watching the office worker spirits come and go until noticing that Elevator #42 never reports to the ground floor. The Storyteller determines the target difficulty based on how well the space is hidden and how busy the space's gateway is. For example, an extra-space that contains a building interesting only for its architecture might require a success at a difficulty of 6 to find. A gate to the CyberRealm might be very carefully concealed, which would have a difficulty of 9 normally, but the coming and going of guards might drop that difficulty to 8 or even 7. Characters who achieve complete success (three successes) can determine the exact dimensions of the extradimensional portal.

- **Getting information from an informational geomid:** To get simple information on the character's current location, the character must use Spirit Speech normally, then the player rolls Charisma + Etiquette against a difficulty of 5. More detailed information is only accessible through a fetish computer. The player rolls Charisma + Computer with a target of 5 for information about the surrounding blocks, 6 for something in the neighborhood, or 7 for information about another part of the city. The location of extra-spaces or any gates to other realms is always a minimum difficulty of 8 to acquire. The

degree of success indicates just how much data the geomid is willing to share. Garou cannot physically enter the Digital Web without a technofetish designed specifically for that purpose. (Informational geomids are found in the *Book of the Weaver*, p. 67.)

- **Finding the Pattern Web without the Web Walker Gift:** While the Pattern Web may seem to be omnipresent in the city's Penumbra, finding a part of it to walk on or climb isn't always easy. Players may roll Perception + Enigmas to allow their characters to puzzle things out, while players whose characters have actual hands-on experience in making things can opt instead to roll Perception + Crafts in a more down and dirty approach. The Storyteller should consider the strength of the Weaver's presence in the area and the number of technospiders traveling through when setting the difficulty, which should generally be low inside the city. While getting on the Pattern Web may be easy, staying on it for long is hard.

- **Breaking things in the Penumbra:** Characters can destroy items and scenery using the same game systems as in the physical world, whether they are performing feats of strength or using weapons to beat the offending object to pieces. If an item is particularly "important" or disused, it may (at the Storyteller's discretion) be stronger or weaker than its physical counterpart. There is no rule for how broken Penumbral items will affect the physical realm — this is left for the Storyteller to tailor to the needs of her story.

spirits live together densely there, and any infraction of etiquette will be immediately reported and gossiped to death — and if you don't think that's dangerous, you'll learn the hard way.

Blight and Hellholes are just plain bad news. Hellholes draw their nastiness strictly from the Wyrm's realms, while Blights are Weaver emanations corrupted to the Wyrm's service. You'll find more Blights around here than Hellholes — the Wyrm's minions find it much easier to pervert the work of others than to build something themselves. Both are homes for Banes and smaller Wyrmlings; Blights also host technospiders completely subverted to the Wyrm's cause. Cleaning these spiritual stains from both worlds is another unending task for the Garou — they will probably return, but for as long as it takes the fetid energy to pool and

reform, the worlds are better places. I have long advocated the unpopular position that the Garou should defend Webs — pure Weaver domains — as assiduously as we defend Glens, to force the Wyrm to fight in the open under its own power. I also remain hopeful that cleansed and destroyed Blights may reform as pure Webs.

I've already gotten ahead of myself and mentioned Webs, zones dominated by Weaver energy. It would frankly be impossible to discuss Domains here in the city without reference to them. They are cold and sterile, but also capable of displays of unearthly beauty and symmetry. Spiders and geomids march through in perfect formations, and information pulses visibly through the strands of the Digital Web intertwined through each structure and the ground itself. The Pattern Web is easily visible

here, and extends into the Near Umbra to the limit of vision. Every Web is connected to the CyberRealm via the Pattern Web — if you can find the right strands to follow. The CyberRealm does not move through the Umbra, so once you have found a path, you will always be able to reach it. Some Webs also have paths to the Scar, but these paths are dangerous even to those using the Web Walker Gift because of the Banes that scuttle out of that vile realm. They are also less stable — when the Scar has drifted far enough, the strands of the Pattern Web will snap, flinging unlucky travelers into some unknown part of the Umbra.

The Gauntlet

If you've stepped sideways even once in the city, you know how much harder it can be here than from the grounds of a wilderness caern. I'm sure you've learned the reasons why, but let's go through a refresher anyway, because it's important. The Weaver created the Gauntlet between the Umbra and the Gaia realm, and she's the one who maintains it. In areas where she is strong, the Gauntlet is correspondingly difficult to pass through, and where she is weak, it can be as easy as wishing yourself through. Some say that the Weaver spun the Gauntlet because she went crazy. Others say it was because

she wanted to make a safe place for her adopted human charges. There are plenty of other ideas on the issue, too — we could argue theology and cosmology all night, but the practical issue remains the same. The gulf between the worlds is wide in the city, and well defended.

The Gauntlet isn't uniform, however, despite the Weaver's certain desires. It has its flaws, places where it is strained near to bursting, and it has its nearly impenetrable bulwarks. If you're going to be spending any time in the city, it would behoove you to find out where some of those places are.

The safest place to find an easy Gauntlet passage is at an urban caern or one of our rare but treasured Glens. "Safest" doesn't necessarily mean "safe," though. Urban caerns are well defended, and they didn't get that way just to let every random country werewolf go traipsing through the bawn drawing attention. Visitors to a caern can expect to face a little-g gauntlet of Garou and spirit defenders, so the best policy is an introduction and deference to territory as per the Litany, and an appropriate chimirage gift to the Warder in exchange for the right to use the area under his protection. Even better, get with the 21st century and phone ahead or send email. Glens are also well protected, but the spirit guardians don't always



have reliable phone reception, so you'll have to visit in person with your chimirage.

In the category of distinctly unsafe places to easily cross the Gauntlet, we have areas infested with Wyrm-taint, some particularly nasty few infected to the extreme of becoming Hellholes. The destructive Wyrm energies in these places continually gnaw away at the Weaver's work, and the fabric of the Gauntlet is a favorite snack. It's nearly impossible to pass through the Gauntlet in a full-fledged Hellhole without attracting immediate and violent attention. In areas that are merely tainted, you might meet no immediate resistance, be set upon by annoying but easily squished Wyrmlings, or find yourself face-to-toe with some monstrous Bane — how's your luck been running? Chimirage isn't an acceptable option here, so it's either fight or run. If you've come to pick a fight, you could hardly find a better place.

The worst place to even consider trying to step sideways is a haven for high tech. A server farm, a light-industry manufacturing plant, a pharmaceutical research lab, or worst of all the Department of Motor Vehicles—places like this are almost guaranteed to have a Gauntlet that feels like woven Kevlar. If you've identified the corresponding patch of the Umbra to be a Web domain, you know better than to even try, right? It's not just the rooms with the tech toys, either—once a site has proven its worth, technospiders blanket the entire place so that you can't just easily slip into a broom closet and reach through that way. It might surprise you though, what kinds of places are actually relatively easy to step through. A hospital might be antiseptic and uptight, but down in the ER the constant parade of death and pain plus the freaked-out next of kin and the full-time insane lobby fixtures all combine to keep the Gauntlet lower. The manic energy of a stock trading floor invites a constant Wyld assault on the Gauntlet there — it may be easy to slip through, but it's also a hive of activity on the Penumbral side, so act nonchalant. And remember, if it really comes down to it, there is no stretch of the Gauntlet that is so tough that you can't get through it if you're good enough, and try hard enough. We're Garou, and the spirit world is our home, too.

To be briefer, my first piece of advice on stepping sideways in the city can be summed up as "choose your place carefully." The second is, find yourself a pack with a brilliant Theurge and treat him or her like gold. Even if she insists that you can't wear clothing with zippers because it's offensive to the spirits, or spills the plot loudly in movie

Gauntlet Ratings and Trapped Gauntlets

Typical Gauntlet Ratings:

- 9 Microchip manufacturer's clean room, State Supreme Court Clerk's Office
- 8 Inner city slum, downtown financial district, Intensive Care Unit
- 7 Children's playground, suburban neighborhood, convenience store, church sanctuary
- 6 Large city park, art museum, organic health food store, maternity ward
- 5 Typical urban caern
- 4 Powerful urban caern

Trapped Gauntlets: A trapped Gauntlet attacks Garou who pass through with an attack rating equal to the local Gauntlet rating and a base of one level of lethal damage. The Gnosis roll to step sideways acts as a dodge, reducing the amount of damage done. The remaining damage is soaked by Willpower, not Stamina. When a pack steps sideways together, each member faces the attack separately, but they still use the leader's Gnosis result as a dodge.

theaters, your life is in her hands when you reach through the Gauntlet.

That bit about your life being in her hands isn't really a dramatic overstatement. If you make a mistake stepping sideways out in the countryside, you may get stuck and have to wait for help, or you may take a fantastic, two-week journey through some Umbral wormhole, which you can't remember once you hit ground again. In the city, it's unlikely that anyone will happen along to help your sorry stuck self (unless your buddies are right there, in which case why did you even try it by yourself?) before the spiders show up. It's also much less likely that a misstep will squirt you out somewhere unexpected—the Gauntlet just isn't permeable enough for that around here. When the spiders come for you, if you're lucky they'll cement you in place, calcifying you into the structure of the Gauntlet or a nearby strand of the Pattern Web. You'll survive for as long as your Gnosis holds out, leaving some time for a search and rescue — hope you've got friends. If no one finds you, your desiccated husk will help prop up the world till the end of time. If you're unlucky, you'll be marched off to join the work crews in the Scar, which are always hiring qualified individuals to suck dry of spirit. Rescue is still possible, but it's not easy. And finally, if you draw enough attention and fight hard enough, a

big-league enforcer like a Chaos-Monitor might stop by and try to just kill you dead.

And if the consequences of failure aren't scary enough, lately we've been hearing stories of some pretty gruesome successes. Normally, stepping sideways through the Gauntlet feels like pushing through heavy, sticky cobwebs, or at worst pushing through wet concrete. In some dangerous places, it feels more like razor wire or broken glass, and werewolves come out the other side cut to ribbons. Worse, it's almost impossible to sense beforehand — we're used to looking *through* the Gauntlet, not *at* it. It's a skill we'll have to learn. From what we can tell, the booby traps don't blanket entire areas, but are limited to careful placement in high security zones in, say, blind corners with no security camera coverage, or just inside vulnerable access hatches. A yard or two in any direction might save you from a flensing, so give that space if you can.

Near Umbra

I've heard it said that in the furthest reaches of the Umbra, anything is possible. If that's the case, then in the Near Umbra, nearly anything is possible. We city-dwellers have just as much contact with the Near Umbra as the campfire and outhouse contingent does — we need to chat with our totems, seek the advice of powerful spirits and get in touch with our ancestors just like every other werewolf. We may even spend more time there, since many of us travel the Pattern Web instead of paying the toll for a moon bridge. And we've got easy access to some Near Realms that make our country cousins more than a little nervous.

The Scar

The Scar represents the most oppressive arms of the Weaver and Wyrm; servants of those two corrupt fractions of the Triat push spirits and emanations through backbreaking factory labor in order to milk every ounce of Gnosis from them. The Scar is filled to the horizon in all directions with vast factories, belching filth into the sky. Open fires burn at the top of half the smokestacks in the Scar, unwitting testament to the inefficiency of the place's labor and factories. Nothing good or worthwhile comes out of these factories: it isn't as though they're manufacturing children's toys or laborsaving devices.

The "employees" of the factories in the Scar work 80-hour weeks if they're lucky; every drop of sweat is converted into spirit energy that is paid out to the factories' dread owners. These powerful

Banes and corrupt Weaver-spirits hoard the essence of the Scar, hoping to use the power they gain to force a promotion to the gleaming and luxurious facilities of the CyberRealm, Malfeas itself, or into the physical realm.

These days, the Scar's influence is fading, especially by contrast to the CyberRealm. The management and leadership of Scar's factories have mostly migrated to the skyscrapers of the CyberRealm, and into the hands of handpicked Weaver spirits. Daily work orders come by courier spirit or as encoded electronic messages through the Digital Web. The most ambitious managers left try every angle to get out, but the Scar's powerful Bane masters find themselves unwelcome in the glass and chrome halls of power in the CyberRealm. Those who force the issue find themselves forced into early retirement, or given "lateral promotions" into the depths of the CyberRealm's Pit.

As hard-labor manufacturing jobs leave the United States and Europe for facilities in South and East Asia, those few sages who pay close attention to such things have noticed that the Scar has drifted through the Umbra. It is now considerably closer to the Yomi Realm of eastern Asia than it ever has been. Servants of the wicked masters of Asia's Hell have begun to move into the power vacuum created as the former leaders of Scar move out of the realm.

The CyberRealm

It was not so long ago that the Glass Walkers treated the CyberRealm like a vast cybernetic arcade. We made day trips to pick up techno-toys found nowhere else, had fetishes woven into our flesh, conducted our business in penthouse suites. It was a sweet arrangement, until somebody blew it.

There are many roads to the CyberRealm. You can reach the CyberRealm by climbing along the Pattern Web; every Web domain has a path just waiting to be found. Traditionalists can opt to travel by moon bridge. If you're in a big hurry, you can try to slip through a Gate built by the Weaver to expedite the movements of her minions, but you'd better be sly. And last, if you have a fetish computer, you can tap into all of the information in the CyberRealm through an informational geomid in the Penumbra. Once you've found a route, you can always reach the CyberRealm that way; the Weaver's presence is so strong that the Realm does not drift as all other Realms do. It may not be smart to take the same path every time, but you can.

There are three parts to the CyberRealm: Spider City, the Pit, and the Computer Web. Let's start at the bottom. The Pit is a labyrinth of garbage and tunnels that digs as deep as the Realm's skyscrapers stretch high. It's full of predatory Weaver spirits and Banes who snack on the Realm's most unfortunate residents. Don't go there, unless you're looking for something, or someone, that might have been thrown away. Or, if you're looking for sneaky access to some other chthonian, unpleasant Realm, you may find a way hidden at the end of a maze of tunnels. I've heard theories that when the Scar loses too much steam, it'll be incorporated into the CyberRealm, and this is where it'll join up. You think the Scar is bad now? Wait until it's underground.

Spider City starts at ground level and goes way, way up. Predictably, it's built like an orb spider's web, but three dimensional, with suspended roadways and elevated monorails connecting skyscrapers taller than the eye can see. Old Town is at the bottom of the heap; only ancient concrete foundations keep it from sliding into the Pit. This is where the Cyber Wolves fight their daily battle for survival, scrounging weapons and Gnosis from Weaver patrols or by raiding higher into the city. Old Town is the highest Banes are allowed to climb in the CyberRealm; the Weaver is serious about protecting her jewel of a city. Downtown is sealed off from Old Town. Here's where you'll find the vendors, selling everything from software to style wear to information. And guns: big, big guns. If you can pass as human and get your hands on an ID badge, you might be safe. Just remember that everybody in Downtown is looking to move Uptown, and they'd be happy to make you a part of their corporate ladder. Finally, Uptown is where the big boys live and play. If you aren't a Weaver spirit, you don't belong there, and it's only a matter of time until the patrols find you. I can't think of any good reason to go to Uptown anymore — the shopping's in Downtown, and the information is in the Computer Web. You can climb to the Computer Web through Uptown if you need to, but why would you need to? Maybe you're trying to put a hit on one of the bosses in Uptown — like I said, I can't think of any good reason.

Ah, the Computer Web. All of the information that anyone has stored anywhere on any computer is floating gently above Spider City, twinkling like a star caught in a net. The structure of that net is the Macro Level, and the twinkly datastores make up

the Micro Level. You'll need to be good with computers and logic to find your way around, or be good at tricking spirits into doing your dirty work for you. Forget the BFG's, friends, this is the CyberRealm's best contribution to the fight against the Wyrm. Every dodgy corporate memo, every untouched field report, every incriminating blackmail photo stored on a computer is in there somewhere, just waiting for you to find it. The spiders up there can get protective of their bits and bytes, but they're just doing their jobs.

The influence of the twisted urban hells of the Asian Umbra on the CyberRealm is growing, just as it is in the Scar. There are certainly passages between the Realms through the Pit. I would not be surprised to find Gates higher up in the city, even in Uptown. I'm sure the guys at the top have lots to talk about.

Want More?

For more information about the Scar and the CyberRealm, see **Umbra**. For more information on the Umbra of Asia, see **Hengeyokai** and **The Thousand Hells**.

Umbral Ecology

Everything you see, touch and smell in the Umbra is a spirit, or was made by a spirit. The largest exception to that rule is us — the Garou. The other exceptions — other breeds of shifters, or the occasional Namer — are vanishingly rare here in the city.

That doesn't mean that every spirit is an awake and active one. The spirits of natural things (in which I include man-made items, which are as natural as the man that made them) seldom awaken themselves where the servants of the Weaver are strong. This is a matter of self-defense, I think. An active spirit is a greater threat to order than a slumbering one, and so the active spirits are more likely to be harassed or even calcified back to sleep. Awakening a spirit within city limits is not always a favor to it, especially if you can't take it with you or won't be around to defend it. Still, it is against the nature of living things to stay inactive forever; even in the most web-laden parts of town you may find a lively spirit just up from a long nap.

Spirits who work for the Triat are always active — they only live to serve, after all. (Thankfully, they do seem to sleep — downtime for data processing for the technospiders, and I don't know,

pus and ooze reservoir refilling for the Wyrmlings.) There's a big difference between Weaver and Wyrm servitors, however: the spiders might be indifferent, but the Wyrmlings always try to ruin your day. Weaver spirits have jobs to do. If you're breaking into a computer system, and a little pattern spider wanders by picking up trash, it keeps doing its job. Sure, it remembers what it saw and reports it eventually, but by the time that report gets uploaded and somebody bothers to review all the garbage-picking reports, you're long gone. Any Wyrm-touched spirit either beats the crap out of you, or runs off to find something that can. The erosion of discipline and the creatively destructive urges that Wyrm-tainted spider spirits suffer make them the scariest opponent you can run into in the city. And, of course, there are always the Weaver spirits whose only job is to watch for you and to kick your ass when you show up. Nothing to be done for that but to tread lightly.

The City Awakens: City Fathers and Mothers

Klein slouched on the teacher's desk in Room 208. Most of the cubs actually looked more comfortable behind school desks, even if it was 10 PM. He'd have to

More Spirits

A veritable plethora of Weaver-spirits and their charms can be found in **Umbra** and **Book of the Weaver**. The **Book of the Wyrm** can supply your baser needs.

work on that. "All right, our topic for tonight is 'emergence.' Do any of you know what I'm talking about?" Blank faces stared back at him. He sighed and scrubbed his eyes. "What do they teach you kids in school these days? I'll make it painfully simple for you. You take a system, let's say a computer network. It's made up of a bunch of little parts, all just doing their own job. Add enough of those little parts, and the whole network might be capable of doing more than the sum of the work of those little parts. You see where I'm going here?"

Several hands shot up. "Artificial Intelligence!" shouted one cub.

"Good. I see some of you stayed up late reading under the covers," Klein replied. "But now, think spirit. People instead of processors, all connected by roads, telephones, pipes — what does that get you?"

A moment of silence, then a tentative hand snuck up. "A City Father?"



"Very good!" Klein beamed. "Around here, we have a City Mother, though, and don't forget it. She can be touchy."

The back row of the "class" dissolved in laughter as Diego made the predictable joke that Counts-On-Fingers lives in the City Mother's ass crack. The lights flickered, and went out. Klein groaned. "What did I just say? You're going to be clapping erasers till dawn for that one."

The theory of emergence, to distill it down to painfully basic principles, is that a sufficiently complex system has qualities that surpass the simple sum of its individual parts. The results of any emergent process are by their nature unpredictable. The Holy Grail of emergence, and the pinnacle of unpredictability, is for the system to achieve sentience. All around the world, sprawling cities test the limits of the theory on a scale a computer engineer could only dream of — and the Garou who live within those cities might find their homes coming to life right underneath their feet.

City Fathers and City Mothers are the soul of the city, the intelligence spawned by the 24-7 interaction of people and machines within a delimited space. As an extension of the city, they draw their personality and abilities from the civic character and available resources of the communities that are their reason for being. Once created, they are independent of the city that birthed them, but they are irreconcilably tied to the city: physically and spiritually, by political and geographic borders, and by destiny. The Father of a city that has been razed to the ground may linger on in the Umbra as the world mourns its singular attractions and its residents. The Mother of a city absorbed into a sprawling megalopolis faces the real possibility of a rapid and brutal demise as the things that made her domain unique are subsumed into a new identity. At the same time she gains a rare chance to grab for power and expand her territory through careful negotiation or by ruthlessly eliminating rivals. It seems petty, but remember that although very inhuman entities, they're still the human side of a city's spiritual makeup. They aren't human, but they are humanity. Kind of.

It was not long ago that City Fathers were rare — an aberration, not the rule. They were generally a rumor up until the last century or so. Then, in huge metropolises, quintessential cities like New York and London, their presence was confirmed by

enough Garou and spirit contacts to convince all but the most Luddite Theurges.

Within the last decade, City Fathers have been popping up as quickly as cybercafes. Ironically, they may be proliferating for the same reason — computer networks. Electricity flowing down wires, and radio and TV broadcasts filling the airwaves were enough of a jolt to wake up Toronto and Chicago, but add in a network of fiber-optic cable in addition to double or triple the amount of copper wire, all thrumming with raw information and barely edited human thought, and eventually the balance tips away from "improbable" to "possible."

Other Theories

The Glass Walkers have their pet theories, but they could easily be wrong — not that they'd ever admit that. For as long as there have been cities, there may have been City Fathers. People like to build in patterns, and with geometric shapes that don't occur naturally; maybe City Fathers are spirits trapped or enticed by the sacred geometry of human spaces. Cities as ancient as Mohenjo Daro (roughly 2,000 BCE) had basic plumbing and sewage systems; toilets, writing, vast trade markets — what's not to like for a forward-thinking spirit? City Fathers do become easier to rationalize after the widespread adoption of the telegraph around the time of the Civil War (the 1860's) and the subsequent proliferation of pulsing electric wires. A little spark of electricity may have been all a City Father needed for inspiration.

Relations with the Spirit World

City Fathers best fit into the Garou cosmology as Epiphlings, not formed by the concept of "city," but by the concept of "Houston" or "Calcutta." They are unusual as Epiphlings in that they are almost always encountered in the Penumbra, since their travels outside the bounds of their city are strictly limited to urban Realms that are spiritually contiguous to their domains, the most common examples being the Scar and the CyberRealm. If there is a Great City Father that serves as the template for each individual City Father and Mother, it is ensconced in the Epiphling Realms of the Middle Umbra, as unreachable as vast concepts like War and Courage. Occasionally a Father or Mother may show signs of having evolved from a different type of spirit. A city that has long relied

on its harbor for its identity and survival might have a City Mother with a bluish tinge to her skin and seaweed in her hair, suggesting her humble beginnings as a water elemental. A City Father who appears as the spitting image of the city's founder may very well be a human ancestor-spirit (rare and strange as they are) who couldn't keep his hands off the place that bears his name. By the time they step into the role of City Father, their origins are relevant only to puzzling out their more obscure motivations; they all have Charms and abilities that let them influence and guide the city they represent.

City Fathers are not Weaver-spirits; the Weaver does not create them nor do they naturally occupy a slot in her hierarchy. Their loyalties are not first to any member of the Triat, they are to the metropolis they represent. Any responsibilities they have to the Weaver are the result of chiminage or truces with her minions; any authority they wield over those minions comes from the same source, or else from repeatedly demonstrated brute force. That said, City Fathers do tend to be on good terms with the denizens of the Weaver's webs — they know what side of their bread is buttered. Most have the stature to command the Weaver-spirits native to their domain, and keep a hold on that power by cleaning up big messes before the big guns come to town and pull rank. This does not tend to improve their status in the eyes of those Garou that consider City Fathers to be nothing more than Weaver pawns.

Like humans, City Fathers usually start out with the best of intentions. What could be wrong with promoting civic pride or industrial development? The steps the spirit pursues, however, can lead down a dark path: promoting civic pride, for instance, by promoting bigotry to remove the city's "undesirable elements;" or turning a blind eye to pollution discharges to encourage the growth of industry. Actions like these, whether initiated by the City Father or by elements within the community, lead inexorably to Wyrm-taint. A spirit unwilling to be sullied can fight back, and often enlists a pack of Garou to help. City Fathers who willingly choose a destructive path can quickly find themselves lording it over slums full of trapped poor while anyone with the means moves outside city limits — even while gnawing themselves hollow from the inside, these spirits can manage to be a werewolf's worst enemy.

The Wyld tends to be a mystery to City Fathers — they have little concept of what it's good

for, other than bringing in grant money for un-hinged artists. Unleashed, it usually manifests in riots, large-scale fires, or other catastrophes that do absolutely nothing to improve the city. If the Wyld presence in the city limits itself to the cultural district or a hippie liberal arts college, a City Father can tolerate it, but when it starts to spread out of its prescribed boundaries to cause trouble for the normal day-to-day of the city, that tolerance ends.

Goals

City Fathers tend to have common large-scale goals — there are a limited number of things that a city needs, after all. These goals will have different priorities in different cities, as geography, politics and history influence what a City Father can get, and how it tries to get it.

One extremely practical goal is to expand the city geographically, bringing a larger territory under the City Father's control. The city is the spirit's whole world, in many ways. A City Father knows the outside world exists; he hears about

City Father, or City Mother?

City Fathers and City Mothers are beings of pure spirit. They aren't truly male or female, they have simply chosen a representative, humanoid form — or a form was chosen for them by the subconscious consensus of the people who live there. If Paris has a spirit, by way of example, it is probably a City Mother, while Seattle, an overwhelmingly male mecca of programmers and grunge bands, most likely has a City Father. Their close ties to the Weaver mean that City Fathers and Mothers keep the same form; they and those they work with value stability and predictability. It can happen, though, that a significant change in the community's makeup (a vibrant immigrant community, or an upsurge in grassroots politics) eventually has an effect on the city's spirit that can change its apparent age, ethnicity, and yes, gender. The change is rarely gradual. It is abrupt, bordering on instantaneous, as if a rising subconscious wave had finally battered down the Weaver's stasis dams. On wandering into the Umbral office to notice that your boss has changed from a she to a he, a wise Garou compliments him on his tie, orders new business cards, and gets back to work.

events and witnesses their effects on his holdings. But if his town is boring or crowded, the spirit can't simply pack his bags and leave. City Fathers with large bank accounts may try to expand very directly, through real estate development ventures: buy land just outside city limits, develop the land, then petition the zoning board or city council for admittance. This method is also the most likely to run afoul of the Garou, if the proposed development is on ecologically or spiritually significant land, or if the city is simply expanding too aggressively for the werewolves. More subtle methods are generally preferred. Manipulating the desirability of land on the city's edges, or encouraging tax breaks or low-cost loans for development are common tactics.

Things get messy when the only way to expand is to take over other urban areas. If the adjacent area has no City Father of its own, the spirit can extend its influence through the Umbra; the physical world will eventually adapt its boundaries to the spiritual reality. This isn't necessarily as easy as it sounds — spirits who were existing just fine without a boss may be unwilling to roll over when the boss moves in. If the City Father has a political in, he can try to have areas annexed. This will give the spirit some authority, but he will still have to assert his dominance. Neighborhoods that retain a distinct identity within city limits may be areas of spirit resistance; or, if expansion isn't a high priority with the City Father, he may encourage just that kind of independence in pursuit of his other goals.

If the area of contention is the territory of another City Father, and either or both insist on expanding, there will be war in the Penumbra — and the city will suffer. Property values in the contested areas will drop, residents will move, crime will go up. If neither side has a clear upper hand, the effects of a war would be so detrimental to both that open hostilities never erupt. Instead, both sides maneuver and plot, maintaining plausible deniability for their intrusions. In other cases, they may join forces to usurp a third area, dividing the spoils between them.

Hand in hand with acquiring land is increasing population. Territory empty of people doesn't do a City Father a whole lot of good. Even better, if there is space available, building the population practically guarantees the acquisition of more land. There are three ways to go about getting more people: more births, fewer deaths, and encouraging movement into the city. The first two require decent

hospitals and other child and elderly-friendly amenities like schools and city parks. People like to move to cities with those benefits, too. City Fathers can try to fine-tune the influx of people by encouraging different types of jobs; or, on the darker side, try to keep the "wrong sort" of people out by encouraging discrimination on an institutional level and bigotry on a personal level.

Wealth, influence and prestige often ebb and flow together, determining the city's outward face on a regional, national or even global level. They are not always directly tied, however. A city like Washington D.C. that plays host to vast political influence may have serious money issues. Pittsburgh gets more prestige than money for hosting several world-class hospitals. Houston has the dough but supports a very small arts community, pulling it down on the prestige scale. Since the people are a part of the City Father, in a way, the priorities of the community and the spirit will usually be compatible — unless there has been a dramatic change in the makeup or attitudes of the community, or a new City Father has taken over. These cities will seem schizophrenic for awhile, until the priorities shake out: the rich are courted then slapped with taxes, cultural districts built only to languish, or national political campaigns flop on their home turf.

Items lower down the City Father's list of priorities can get quirky. Spirits are individuals, after all, with their own histories and experiences, and old habits die hard. Perhaps the City Father of San Francisco still has a prospector's eye and a taste for gold, or the spirit of Boston can't stand the smell of molasses ever since the Great Molasses Flood of 1919.

City Fathers and Caerns

With both City Fathers and urban caerns growing more common, it's a safe bet that the two will come into contact — or conflict.

A City Father that is a fanatically devoted to the Weaver, or worse, touched by the Wyrm, will have serious issues about having a wellspring of Gaian energy on his turf. The sept might have to deal with 24-hour monitoring, police harassment, a beefed-up Animal Control squad — anything a City Father can influence to keep his enemies off balance and under his thumb. The Veil itself could be at risk; a rogue City Father might bet that he could hide his mastermind influence while the fierce werewolves were rounded up live on the five o'clock news. In septs where the relationship has deterio-

rated, a pack following the City Father will naturally not be welcome.

A more balanced City Father will still have reasonable concerns about a power source in his city that is under the control of forces not always allied with him. The spirit may have the caern watched — in the interest of the city's security, of course — and may appoint an official Garou or spirit liaison to the sept. He may even insist that his representative be present at caern moots. In septs that allow free access to the caern for the City Father and his underlings, there may be intricate subterfuges and spying taking place behind the scenes as both sides try to hide certain activities and interests from the other. In such septs, a pack with the City Father totem may be relatively welcome, but still find themselves left out of planning and strategizing, if not left out of certain activities entirely — they will always been seen as a possible Weaver security breach.

It is theoretically possible, although not at all likely, that a City Father could become the patron of a small, low-powered caern. This has advantages and disadvantages. On the plus side, any City Father who is attuned enough to Gaian energies to become the totem of a caern is likely to be an advocate for the Garou and their mission in the world. The members of the sept will have freer reign in the city than they would otherwise, and the community will benefit from the creative energy that suffuses through the City Father to his domain. The greatest disadvantage is that a City Father isn't part of the greater spirit hierarchy — there's no Incarna watching his back, ready to step in if things get too hairy. The Garou have to guard their caern and totem even more fiercely than usual, because one fell swoop could eliminate the spirit entirely, leaving the caern adrift and vulnerable.

City Fathers as Pack Totems

Inevitably the question arises: What can you do for me? That's a legitimate question when making a decision as important as a pack's selection of a totem, especially when considering an unconventional option like a City Father. There are a lot of great benefits to becoming a Child of the City, but there are some significant drawbacks as well.

The first, very important point is that a City Father is not a representative of some distant Incarna. His power and authority is not drawn from the Totem Realms of the Umbra, it's drawn from the city itself. They are relatively powerful

The Corporate Father

Glass Walker theorists (and Bone Gnawer conspiracy nuts) have put forward the idea that geographical boundaries might not necessary to the formation of a spirit similar to the City Father. The Corporate Father would, in essence, replace the physical bounds of the city with the psychological bounds of the company. In the global economy, such a creature could have unprecedented mobility and astonishing power. To support their position, some theorists point to the Patriarch as an example of a spirit that draws its meaning from an organization rather than territory.

To date, there have been no reliable meetings with or sightings of a Corporate Father (or CSO, Chief Spirit Officer, as jargon hounds would have it). There is, however, a growing acceptance among the Glass Walkers that it is only a matter of time. At least one Theurge has put aside a pair of emergency pants against that eventuality.

spirits, but more importantly they are resourceful and practical. Each City Father is a unique entity in the world of the spirit. When you deal with a City Father, you deal with the man at the top of a very lonely totem pole.

What does this mean for the pack? It means that there is only one pack that can claim to be Children of the City, in any given city. A City Father simply does not have the attention or power to support more than one pack. It also means that the pack totem won't be with them 24 hours a day, keeping an eye out in the Penumbra and providing backup in a fight. If the pack is planning to clear Wyrm spirits out of the old abandoned brewery, they'd better clear it with their totem's calendar first. Better yet, they should just take care of it and report in when they're done. A City Father will generally provide a spirit assistant who can take notes, carry messages, and stand lookout in a pinch.

The totem is even further out of touch when the pack goes outside the city — and they'll probably need to go outside the city a lot, since the primary reason a City Father will become a pack's patron is to gain some trustworthy agents to act where he can't. The benefits the City Father gives his Children fail outside his city, as well. (The standard benefits to being a member of a pack,

such as crossing the Gauntlet together, still apply.) Most City Fathers choose packs that are resourceful, knowing that they will often have to work without guidance or supervision. Still, they have a vested interest in success, so they will provide what tools they can: talens appropriate to the occasion; mundane equipment; and money, paper or plastic.

The last disadvantage is that the City Father will always act in the best interest of the city, as he perceives it. This will not always be in the best interest of Gaia, or the Wyld, or the spotted owl. This is somewhat mitigated by most City Father's openness to negotiation. A Child of the City asked to lobby for a deal that will bring a polluting industrial plant and 500 jobs to the city can counter-offer to find a manufacturer with a better pollution record to fill the need. Garou working for a City Father are in a position to do great good, but to get there they'll need to know how to pick their battles.

The benefits of being a Child of the City can be tremendous within city limits. A City Father usually commands a great deal of respect from the spirits that live in his city. Even local servants of the Weaver and Wyrm respect his authority to a degree. This authority over the spirits of the city is conferred to the pack (reflected by the Attunement gift they receive); they can ask questions and get answers everywhere in town. This doesn't necessarily carry over to spirits from "out of town," so to speak, who are usually troublemakers anyway. And any spirit will fight or run if it is attacked or feels threatened.

Children of the City also are gifted with a thorough understanding of how their city works topographically and dynamically (this is represented by their 3 additional dice to Streetwise rolls). For werewolves who previously got around with maps, this allows them to recognize and locate important places, and to navigate rush hour with aplomb. For those who already knew their way around, the knack becomes clearly supernatural. They know every bolthole, bus stop and sewer access point, not to mention when the meter maids make their rounds and which of them are hot and single.

Lastly, the Children of the City get the benefit of some ties to the Weaver, perhaps even Weaver allies. The Glass Walkers have long taken such ties for granted, but for members of other tribes, the experience can be eye opening. If a pack member is abducted to the Scar, for instance, the City Father

can put on his best spider-silk suit, march along the Pattern Web, stomp into an overseer's office and demand the return of his valued and productive employee — and he just might pull it off. Packs that have seen the city through the eyes of their City Father totem will probably never again be comfortable with the old Garou saw, "City Bad, Forest Good." Whether that's a good thing or a bad thing, only time will tell.

For rules on City Fathers or Mothers as totem spirits, see the totem section of the Appendix (pg. 123).

Chiminage

Good evening, and welcome to Chiminage 101. Some of you are new to the city, and some of you are just plain new. Those of you who think you've already learned all you need to know about dealing with spirits, sit tight anyway and listen. It's polite, and you just might learn something.

First thing you should know is that chiminage is one of our words that leaked into a human tongue; in this case, specifically French. There, it took on a pretty simple meaning, referring to a toll paid to travel through someone's forest. See, you learned something new already. Now obviously, the concept is a little more complicated than that, something that goes beyond forests. To us, chiminage means a gift given to the spirits to encourage them to look more favorably on the giver.

Yes, you will have to give chiminage to a sept, usually to the Master of the Rite or the Warder, if you want to use their resources, but in theory at least they are accepting the gift as an agent of the caern's totem. And no, chiminage is not a bribe or a quid pro quo. It is a gift, given freely. The distinction may be fine, but it's there and it's important. Americans have lost the fine art of gaining influence through gift giving: just look at the Salt Lake City Olympic Committee. To get anywhere in dealing with the spirit world, you'll have to relearn it.

That's enough of a general overview. Here's some specifics, city style.

Rule #1 is: Always have something on you to give away. Keep a pocket full of little items that might be useful; those things will have just as much value to an urban spirit as they have to you. A subway token, a roll of duct tape, some cigarette butts saved for later, any of these things will grease the skids for a little bit of information. If you feel that you must give a spirit a lighter, please make sure that it's almost empty, for all our sakes.



Rule #2a: The gift should be appropriate to the spirit. Do your research. If you're trying to do something important, like learn a gift or arrange a mutual defense pact, a random gift isn't going to cut it. A spool of copper wire is pretty attractive to an electric elemental. Piercing jewelry makes a fine gift for a pain-spirit — especially if you yank it out of your nipple to hand it over.

You can ignore Rule #2a, so long as you follow #2b.

Rule #2b: The gift should have relevance to the giver. Spirits can sense your emotional connection things. They'll be honored by a gift that's important to you, even if it isn't particularly interesting or useful to them. Your old Boy Scout orienteering badge might thrill a spirit who knows only concrete and glass if it holds your memories. The car keys you got on your sixteenth birthday will carry an aura of freedom with it that any Wyld or Gaian spirit can appreciate. That leads me nicely to my next point...

Rule #3: Never throw anything away. If you upgrade the memory in your machine, keep the old stick; a spirit will want it, if only to eat it. Buy a new PDA? Some forward-thinking Warder somewhere will look swanky with your old one. This doesn't apply only to technology, either. I've given a four-foot tall stack of egg cartons to a spirit that hung around an elementary school. And don't you wish you'd kept your lava lamp? Never mind, you guys are all too young.

Rule #4: Look to the old ways for inspiration. Have you ever heard of Navajo sand painting, where the goal was to create an impermanent work of art as a gift to the spirits? You can adapt that idea here in the city, using chalk or spray paint as a medium. Or, for spirits that are more technosavvy, make a piece of digital art and upload it to them. Make sure you erase your copies to preserve the value of the gift, and definitely don't get caught giving the same priceless original to two spirits — that's a reputation wrecker. Don't get offended if they want to watch you work, though. For many spirits, watching the act of creation is the best part of the gift. Other old favorites, like chocolate, corn, tobacco or bundles of other handy herbs work well in here too, especially if you can pull off the giving with a native flair. Many of the spirits who live here now still remember a time before the city was here.

Rule #5: Don't give too much. Giving a gift that's too extravagant isn't as bad as not giving a

gift, but it's close. It makes you look either desperate or stupid. Worse yet, if one guy consistently over-tips, so to speak, the local spirits will come to expect that treatment and we're all screwed. Save the really original or valuable gifts for when you're asking for favors that require a spirit to use initiative and discretion. Stick to corporate culture style rewards for repetitive, rote tasks.

Those are the basic rules for giving chiminage gifts. Now we come to intangible forms of chiminage. There's a limit to the amount of respect you earn for even the perfect gift. If you're asking a spirit for something really important, you'll have to prove your worth by doing the spirit a favor or completing a quest.

This part of chiminage does come much closer to quid pro quo — you agree to do something and in return receive the agreed-upon service upon completion. A small gift as a physical token of the agreement is both welcome and appropriate. The gift also serves as proof of the agreement, like keeping your receipt. Any spirit that touches the gift object can sense the pact that was made over it, and if the spirit you give chiminage to is destroyed and the victor claims the gift as spoils, you have the right to request the agreed-upon reward from the new owner of the gift. You may not get it, and you may not want anything from the new owner, but you do have the right to make the claim.

The favors that spirits generally ask for run the gamut from delivering messages to ferrying cargo to chasing out enemies. In the city you may be surprised to find the spirits asking favors for — or against — humans. Usually people don't matter much to spirits, but it's hard to ignore all the people in the city, and so fondness for or animosity towards humans are both more widespread. The spirits might ask you to put a new roof on a poor family's house, get rid of a man who leers at kids on the playground, or get the owner of a new age shop to stop harassing spirits with her half-assed rituals in the parking lot.

Quests are unpredictable and dramatic. The thing that distinguishes a quest from a favor is that a quest serves the general good, and a favor serves the interests of the spirit or those close to it. In order to get a good tough quest, a spirit may even consult up its chain of command for an important matter that needs attention. Some of you city slickers may wind up in the deep forest on some spirit errand, while some of you country folk may be here today on a wild goose quest. Finding the last celebrant of a little-known rite and learning it

before she dies; defeating some disgusting squid-like enemy; or tracking down a fetish that has fallen into enemy hands — all this and more you might be in for, if you agree to a spirit quest.

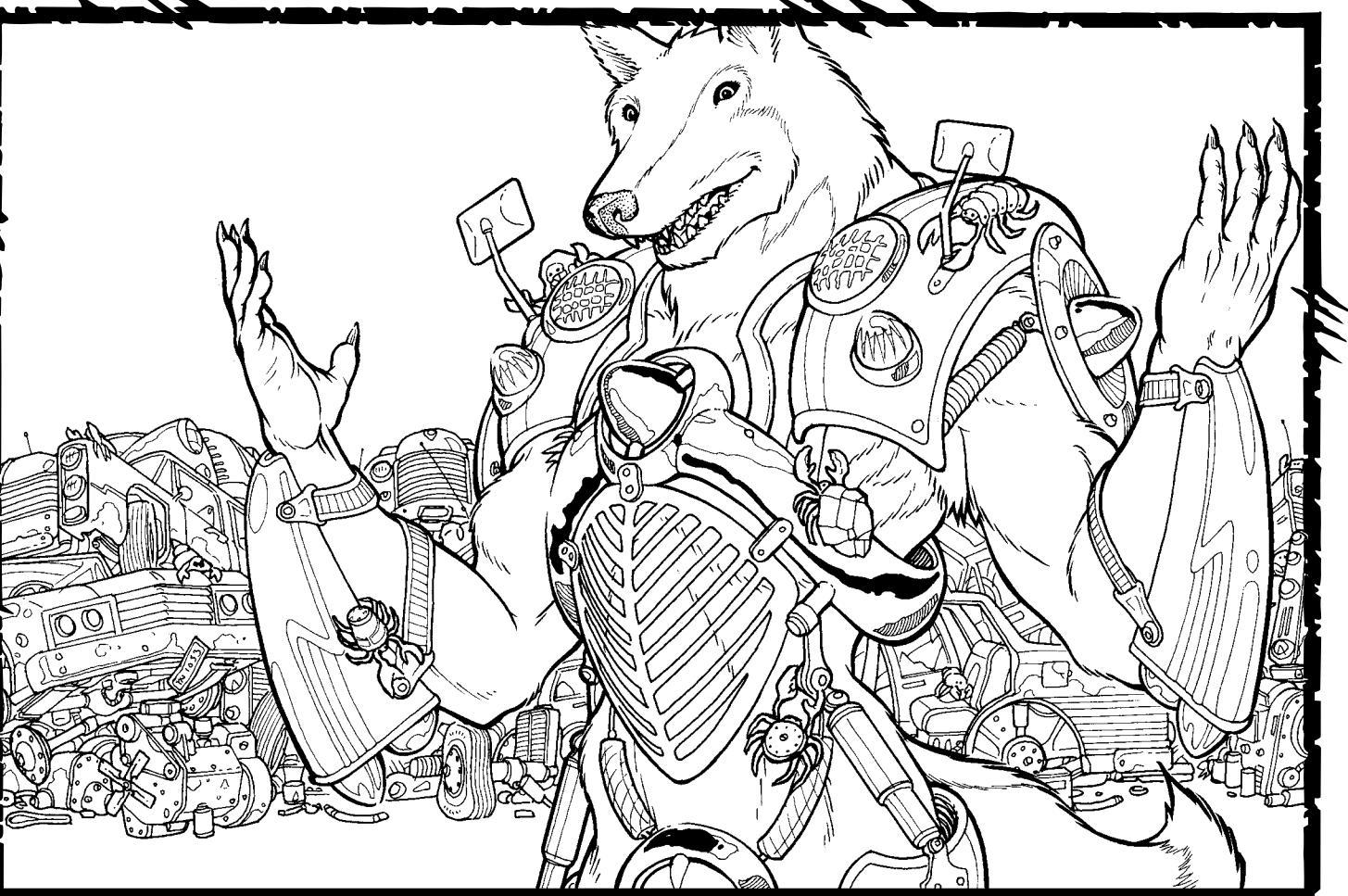
What You Get

Why summon and treat with a spirit? The same reasons you might do so anywhere else — to learn Gifts, create fetishes or talens, and to have services performed. It's the range of services available that might surprise you.

It might also surprise you how many city Garou deal with spirits on their own behalf, instead of waiting for someone else with all the convenient Gifts and caern privileges to get around to doing it for them. There's a simple reason for this, beyond the practical issues and the do-it-yourself mystique — almost every single spirit that lives in the city can speak the predominant human language of the area. Only Gaian spirits might speak the Garou tongue, and fewer of them bother every year. Just because the spirit can talk to you doesn't mean that it will, of course. They like to play it coy, some of them, to see if they can make you mad or to see what you'll offer. See Rule #1 above for easy ways to get them talking.

So just what might an urban spirit do for you that you can't have done outside city limits? Well first, if you want information about a city, you'll have to get it from spirits that live there. Do people go in and out of that "abandoned" warehouse? Are those alligators, or something worse in the sewers? Need to find out who sent an anonymous email, but can't hack it on your own? Want to monitor somebody's phone calls or pager messages — without a physical tap? Just find the right spirit. The value of simple advice on the strength of the local gauntlet can't be overlooked, either. The key to living to fight another day here in the city just might be how well you've treated your spirit allies.

To touch on Gifts again: you'll have to be ready to make big chiminage deals in exchange for instruction. City caerns are usually weaker than those in the wilds, so it's hard to find an honorable place to treat with the spirits who can teach powerful Gifts. There's also less tolerance in the city for the experimentation it takes to learn a gift from another Garou — no nightlong howl-fests or strange light shows except when absolutely necessary. So you've got two options: go visit your country cousins, or be prepared to make a nice offer to a spirit.



Rite of Spirit Awakening

The Rite of Spirit Awakening can be used on any non-sentient creature or item to rouse its spirit to full wakefulness. This is not a rite to be enacted in the city without forethought. Are you awakening something you can take with you, or that you intend to use then put back to sleep immediately? If so, proceed, but with polite caution — there's no telling how a spirit will react to being awakened. The exception to that is plants: even tough sidewalk weeds tend to be all sunny and cheerful when you wake them up.

You'll need to defend the spirit once it is awakened — unusual spirits, like an awakened SUV or fire hydrant, will get the attention of the spiders that maintain the Pattern Web, and your newly-awakened friend will get woven into the city backdrop. Being calcified is mostly like being asleep for a spirit, so that's no so bad — until somebody moves the spirit's physical "body" without first freeing the spirit from the strands. Say you drop the keys for your SUV with the valet and jet off to Paris for a weekend. Your ride gets attacked and glued down, then the valet decides to park your SUV somewhere else — instant lemon. Once the spirit is ripped out

of your vehicle, it'll never work right again. Sell it before it falls to pieces.

New Spirits of the City

Urban Will-O-Wisp

These twisted brothers of the Fog totem enjoy manifesting in the mists and dark of night to lure unwary travelers to their doom. These spirits have kept up with the times: rather than using the bobbing light of a lantern to coax travelers off the road, they mimic the taillights of a car. Sleepy or incautious drivers follow the car ahead of them instead of the road, plunging off embankments or steering directly into roadside trees. If there are survivors, some will-o-wisps are vindictive enough to try to wreck the ambulance on the way to the hospital.

Willpower 3, Rage 8, Gnosis 7, Essence 18

Charms: Airt Sense, Appear, Peek, Re-form, Suggestion

Recycling-spirit

These spirits are relatively new arrivals to the Umbra. Some Theurges theorize that they were

born from the energy saved by re-using materials; they certainly congregate at recycling facilities, whether they were created there or not. They usually look like small land-dwelling hermit crabs, carrying around shells made of glass or metal (some particularly quirky spirits have opted instead for paper-pulp palaces).

Recycling-spirits are rarely bound into fetishes or talens, as they have very few uses so bound. Their power to cleanse blight can only be used on trashed items or dumps — their purpose is to make those items safe to recycle. Their greatest talent is in manipulating trashed items in the physical world: removing the toxic metals from broken computer monitors; peeling the paper and foil layers of items apart for recycling; or, of most interest to the Garou, of helping to craft beautiful new items from “junk.” Recycling-spirits can help a werewolf turn a junkyard car into a suit of armor, or a pile of broken glass into a refracting sculpture. In addition to the aesthetic benefits of their help, involving a recycling-spirit in the creation of a fetish or talens using recycled parts makes binding almost any urban spirit into the item significantly easier. (Certain types of spirit, most notably any spirit associated with money or greed, will resist being put into such an item unless it looks like it could fetch a good price at an overpriced boutique.) For fetishes, reduce the difficulty of the fetish creation ritual by 2. For talens, one additional talen of that type is created for each spirit bound.

These spirits have a serious rivalry with the brood of the Great Trash Heap — every bit of trash recycled rather than tossed is a resource stolen from hungry little trashlings. The trash brood makes occasional hits against the recycling-spirits, smashing their little shells and houses. In return, the recyclers raid the trash heaps for the material to rebuild. Bone Gnawers get involved in these tiffs on both sides, treating it more like flag football than a real fight. As long as both sides keep fighting, the Gnawers can rack up favors from both parties.

Willpower 6, Rage 2, Gnosis 5, Essence 13

Charms: Airt Sense, Armor, Cleanse the Blight, Re-form

Wireless Bats and Cellular Sparrows

These spirits are also newcomers, both finding a niche feeding on the Umbral representations of the digital packets of information that fly through the air like gnats on a summer afternoon. When

your cell call starts to break up in the heart of your coverage area, one of these creatures is snacking on your packets. In clearer areas of the Penumbra, like over a city park or low-rise housing projects, you can watch the sparrows dip and swoop or the bats flutter in their daringly erratic fashion, looking almost precisely like their counterparts. Catch one, and you can see the tracings of circuitry in their wings, or the little electric gleam in their eyes.

The onslaught of information never stops: the sparrows glut themselves on daytime communications, while the bats gorge in the evenings on free nighttime calling then snack lightly through the rest of the night. If caught or bribed, the spirits can recall the bits of information they've found that day; a whole neighborhood of them might each have a piece of a given call. If a werewolf wants information, it's easier for all concerned to make arrangements ahead of time, so that the spirit can home in on the correct conversation and catch as much of it as possible. If the Garou wants to completely stop a message from getting through, it may be possible to wheedle the spirit into materializing to catch the actual packets in the physical world. The spirits dislike doing this, even though their forms look entirely similar to real bats or sparrows.

Willpower 5, Rage 2, Gnosis 4, Essence: 11

Charms: Airt Sense, Materialize, Snatch Wireless Packet, Swift Flight

Ambulance Chasers

These spirits are probably the single most commonly seen Wyldling in the city. They are drawn to the chaos and rampant emotion around accidents and catastrophes, from freeway pileups to apartment building fires. Their name comes from their appearance, flashing lights in red and blue, often accompanied by their screeching imitation of a siren.

Once they reach the scene, they inevitably make things worse. They inflame the already taut emotions of victims and witnesses, or cause gas lines to rupture or unstable buildings to collapse by their very presence. A single ambulance chaser could turn a hostage situation into a slaughter of innocents in minutes. The only benefit they provide is proving an unerring guide to the trouble spot for Umbral travelers. Garou wishing to keep their city in one piece are advised to drive these spirits off before anybody else gets hurt.

Willpower 2, Rage 7, Gnosis 4, Essence 20

Charms: Break Reality, Flee, Kindle, Re-form

Packrat

When an aged widower dies, and his heirs find the walls stuffed with coins and beads, either the old man was a little touched, or a packrat lives somewhere nearby. The simple bushy-tailed woodrat has adapted very nicely to city living — at least in the Umbra. Actual packrats live in cities in arid regions, but spirit packrats have spread far beyond the range of their material relatives.

Packrats are bright-eyed and curious, not to mention acquisitive. It makes its home inside foundation walls, and keeps its stash of shiny or interestingly textured objects in a chamber nearby, in the physical world. Packrats have long thought that electronics looked pretty interesting with all those flashing lights and such, but for years the size of the items was far larger and heavier than a packrat could grab with its Acquisition charm. The boom of miniaturization has made for gleeful packrats, and has probably encouraged their spread beyond their normal habitat. Handheld games, MP3 players, PDAs, even laptop computers are spirited away by inquisitive packrats, played with until the batteries die, then added to the packrat's midden. They don't steal maliciously, but they could certainly become very fine thieves if someone put the idea in their furry little brains.

Willpower 5, Rage 2, Gnosis 6, Essence 13

Charms: Acquisition, Flee, Peek, Re-form

Snare-spirits

Plenty of people come to the city in search of opportunities, but find themselves unable to leave. The reasons for their "entrapment" are many and varied — the inability to save enough money to move again, poorer job prospects elsewhere, and so on. However, the desperate feeling of helplessness has given rise to a particular form of spirit, the snare-spirits.

These spirits are the embodiment of all the various factors that keep people in bad neighborhoods, dead-end jobs or empty relationships. They appear something like metallic daddy-longlegs with limbs of woven steel cable. Whenever they find someone resigned that things will never get better, that it's impossible to "leave," the snare-spirits feed on that resignation and use the energy to fortify the Gauntlet around said person's workplace or home, effectively cutting off any potential venue of hope even further. Many Garou despise the snare-spirits for further driving humans from the spirit world, but others are willing to use the snare-spirits' particular talents against the enemies of Gaia.

Willpower 5, Rage 4, Gnosis 7, Essence 16

Charms: Airt Sense, Calcify, Solidify Reality, Spirit Static

Bl'Dye M'ree/Bloody Mary

Very little is known about this horrifying creature; whether it is a spirit, even whether it exists at all, is a matter of hushed debate. Kinfolk working in social services in the southern United States began to hear stories from the children in their care about a woman dressed in black with eyeless sockets that wept black tears. This fearful apparition, called La Llorona in Spanish, would appear in the middle of the night to mark children for death. Most case-workers ascribed this tale to nightmares, the spillover of a rotten life. But werewolf Kin know that sometimes, monsters are real. When too many children to ignore disappeared or turned up dead after whispering this tale to an adult, the Kinfolk called on the Garou for answers.

The results have been disturbing. A pack of Black Furies in Miami attempted to summon Bloody Mary with the method described in the children's folklore: chanting the spirit's name before a mirror in a darkened room. They reported failure — and then vanished several days after the failed attempt. Spirits become defensive and evasive when asked about La Llorona. Most disturbing of all, several of the children killed appear to have been lost cubs.

The stories and sightings of Bloody Mary have spread all around the globe; every night, there are children going to bed with hearts icy with fear. She bursts through mirrors to snatch up her prey. She strikes children across the face with a red rosary. She sets the skin of young boys on fire with pain; she destroys the will of young girls to reward her followers, ruthless criminals who wreak havoc for her delight, with pliable slaves. But most commonly, the children give one chilling warning: once Bloody Mary has seen your face, she will hunt you until you are dead.

Willpower 5, Rage 10, Gnosis 7, Essence 25

Charms: Blast, Blighted Touch, Create Fires, Materialize, Peek, Shatter Glass, Tracking

Storytelling Notes: Bloody Mary's legend is strongest among children, particularly homeless children. She is the terrible mother that kills her own sons and daughters, the monster adult who hates children just for being children. Her association with blood makes her a particular demon for young girls on the cusp of puberty, the embodiment of all their fears. She is best used as a horrible legend

told by children who believe utterly that she is more powerful than God, that nothing can stop her once she's been loosed. The reality is only slightly less horrifying.

Legal-spirits

The relationship between two non-warring sentient beings is usually constrained by an artificial set of rules. These "laws" have taken on a life of their own, especially in recent times, and the spirits of the laws abound. They attempt to ensure that everything is done by the book and that crime doesn't pay. Naturally, they are a serious pain in the butt to Garou. Through proper manipulation, though, it is possible for Garou to use them to their advantage. Many a legal-spirit has been led to various tainted corporations' accounting records for an evening's monkeywrenching fun.

Legal-spirits come in Jagglings and Gafflings forms. The Jagglings appear as small, thin middle-aged men wearing conservative glasses and dull business suits. While physically unthreatening, the seriousness of their tone and total lack of a sense of humor often set those familiar with the ways of the city on edge. Their Gafflings are gold, star-shaped lights about the size of a hand. They simply act as fact-finders and trackers for the Jagglings.

Jagglings

Willpower 8, Rage 6, Gnosis 8, Essence 22

Charms: Calcify, Control Electrical Systems, Peek, Materialize, Spirit Static

Gafflings

Willpower 4, Rage 4, Gnosis 6, Essence 14

Charms: Calcify, Peek, Tracking

Mersenne

Mersenne is a Prime number-spirit, who usually does not take physical form. He may appear as an abacus layered in ancient Greek inscriptions, or as a computer graphic with infinitely complex, fractal depths. He loves mathematics and number games; he is always computing the value of pi to millions of decimal places and claiming to have found messages, mysteries and secrets in the endless string of random numbers. Mathematicians among the Garou and enlightened Kin enjoy simply chatting with him, emailing him endless video proofs and GIF files of weird equations.

Mersenne's prime value is as a creator of codes. Many Garou employ him to create encryptions unbreakable save by the most powerful mages. In game terms, Mersenne may be induced by bargain-

ing to make email or a website incomprehensible; he has Computers 5, Subterfuge 5 and Intelligence 6. A skill roll determines the number of dice that the encryption has, but Mersenne must be bribed with interesting math problems or nifty stories of code and cipher derring-do. He especially likes a new tale, and these are difficult to find.

Willpower 9, Rage 5, Gnosis 9, Essence 20

Charms: Airt Sense, Control Electrical (and Electronic) Systems, Calcify, Encrypt, Solidify Reality

New Spirit Charms

- **Acquisition:** This Charm allows a spirit to "borrow" a small object from the physical world. The object disappears from the material world and appears in the Umbra; at the end of the scene, the object disappears from the Umbra and reappears in the physical world. If the item is moved or hidden while in the Penumbra, it reappears in the appropriate place corresponding to its new location. The object cannot be removed from the Penumbra, such as into a Near Realm; any attempt to do so immediately shifts the item back into the physical world. In order to use this Charm, the spirit must roll Gnosis against the local Gauntlet. Items larger than a stack of dollar bills or a drinking glass require the expenditure of one Willpower point to acquire; items larger than a suitcase cannot be acquired via this Charm.

- **Appear:** A spirit with this Charm may manifest in front of an observer without assuming material form. The spirit's manifestation is immaterial, and cannot affect the physical world in any way without the use of other Charms that reach across the Gauntlet. To activate the Charm, the spirit must expend one Gnosis point; the spirit may appear, disappear or reappear to the selected observer or observers at will for the remainder of the scene.

- **Flee:** This Charm gives the spirit an effective Willpower of 15 for purposes of escaping a foe; this includes any rolls that actively give the spirit a chance to avoid the presence of others through peaceful means. The cost is one Gnosis for every three turns of flight.

- **Information Flow Tap:** The spirit can tap into the flow of electronic data flowing between two computers without interrupting that flow — the spirit dips a finger into the digital stream between the machines, as it were, and then tastes the data. The Storyteller rolls the spirit's Gnosis against

a difficulty equal to $(10 - \text{the local Gauntlet})$; one success gives general information about the data but cannot distinguish the message's contents if encrypted or protected against magical intrusion. Three successes will pierce mundane encryption. Supernaturally encrypted data (see "Mersenne," above) resists this Charm using the Willpower of the character that ensorcelled it.

• **Kindle:** The spirit with this Charm can kindle the spark of life or emotion into full blaze. A spirit may use this Charm to cause seeds to germinate, fertilization to occur or fruit to grow on trees. The spirit may also choose to use the Charm to kindle powerful emotions into beings either in the material world or the Umbra; the spirit makes a contested Gnosis roll against the target's Willpower,

success indicating the victim is consumed with the appropriate emotion. Either use of this Charm costs two Essence points.

• **Snatch Wireless Packet:** The spirit with this Charm can grab cellular and digital packets coming from or going to phones and pagers. Catching as many packets as possible, and in the process somewhat disrupting communications in a small area, requires a Willpower roll against the rating of the Gauntlet. Finding a particular stream of packets, a conversation, requires a Gnosis roll first against the same target. Chasing down all the packets in a conversation, however, will cause enough static to disrupt the call. After having consumed the packets, the spirit can recount the information the packets contained if it so chooses.





PRESCOTT



Chapter Four: Urban Legends

And then contemporary skyscrapers were so very anonymous — no signs or names, no pinnacle statues or weathercocks or crosses, no distinctive facades and cornices, no architectural ornament at all: just huge blank slabs of featureless stone, or concrete or glass that was either sleekly bright with sun or dark with shadow. Really, they might well be the “gargantuan tombs or monstrous vertical coffins of living humanity, a breeding ground for the worst of paramental entities” that old de Castries kept ranting about in his book.

— Fritz Leiber, “Our Lady of Darkness”

Portraying Cities

As Storyteller, you have a lot of choices to make when portraying cities in your chronicle. You’ll want to figure out first whether your chronicle is set in and around a given city, or whether the city is merely a distant presence that is rarely visited. In a more globetrotting game, the pack may even visit many cities. Next, ask yourself whether you want to use a real city or one of your own creation; there are advantages to each option. You might want to go midway; use a real city as a template, then apply your own changes to fit it into your own chronicle. Finally, decide the theme and mood in which you want to present in the

city. Do you want to be fairly realistic, giving the place both light and dark parts? Does it fit your chronicle better if the city is a filthy den for Wyrm and Weaver creatures to fight it out and feed on humans within? Or perhaps you have another mood in mind — maybe one city in your game has a spark of light and hope, while another is right out of a noir crime novel.

Parts of the City

If you want to put together an interesting city to be the focus of your chronicle (or even just as the center of a few stories you want to tell) it helps if you pick out

some defining features for the city. Below is a by-no-means-exhaustive list of possible features to consider. For each feature, one or two possible story themes are also listed, and you should certainly expand and develop any of them that you wish to use. You can easily turn any of the themes below on its head: Perhaps you want the church to represent vigorous assault on the infidel, as during the Inquisition, rather than having it represent sanctuary (as described below). By all means do so; this isn't intended as a restrictive list but rather as suggestions and possible inspiration.

Churches

From a storytelling perspective, the church represents a bastion of safety for most humans, who turn to the church as sanctuary from the concerns of the outside world. In your city chronicle, the church can act as humanity's defense against the Delirium, erected to protect mortals from the unknown terrors of the night that the Garou were during the Impergium. You can put this into practice by having important (non-Kinfolk) Storyteller characters take shelter in churches.

The church is also humankind's link to a greater spiritual universe. Camps like the Black Furies' Order of the Merciful Mother know this, and take advantage of it. The church can be a wonderful tool for bringing humans into a greater sense of awe and wonder about the mysteries of the universe, rather than letting the relentless press of the Weaver and Wyrm lead them into thinking that all is degraded mechanicity.

Finally, a church can be a stronghold for the Weaver — a place where dogma reigns over genuine love and comfort. Many people have used the props of organized religion to suit their own ends in the past, and that hasn't changed. While it may be over the top to suggest that all or even most churches (or church-goers) are agents of repression and conformity, the "church gone wrong" makes a very striking and memorable foil for Garou and their strong emphasis on spirituality.

City Hall

Every city has a core bureaucracy to provide services and elected leadership to provide guidance. At least, that's the theory. Reality rarely matches that ideal. Most often, in the World of Darkness, the city's bureaucracy exists primarily to further itself, and the leadership exists to provide graft and services to those that helped get the leadership elected, in order to assure reelection.

The parallel here is nearly irresistible. It is entirely in theme to cast the city bureaucracy as a reflection of the calcifying Weaver and the city's elected leadership as a tool of the Wyrm. You can do this by keeping the

city's services away from Garou characters. In order to deal with seemingly simple problems (such as city taxes, parking tickets, or jury duty) the characters must go down to City Hall, wait in line, find out they're in the wrong line, fill out paperwork, wait hours or weeks for a response — which will no doubt tell them to fill out more paperwork, or file an amendment to the form they already filed — and so on. The Weaver ensnares everything in this fashion.

The elected officials of a city may be either tools of the Wyrm or simply a reflection of it. While a bargain with a hideous creature from the outer darkness is probably a drastic solution to your desire to become the Registrar of Wills, mayors and other high city officials might well be in league with established forces of the Wyrm in town.

Computer/Biotech Industry

The computer industry, particularly the Internet, is coupled tightly with the Pattern Web and the Weaver's grand design of rigid order and tight planning. Every human process that is subjugated to software flow and every interaction that takes place over the Internet instead of in person pushes more energy into the Weaver's waiting arms. While the Glass Walkers and some other werewolves use computer technology toward Gaian ends, few Garou entirely trust something that sprang so obviously out of the Weaver's hands. And many Garou are very ignorant about computer engineering, and can't easily tell if software or hardware work is especially Weaver-oriented. Accordingly, computer industry companies receive a disproportionate share of Garou attention — innocuous software houses filled with computer engineers who couldn't summon a Mountain Dew if the vending machine were broken might receive periodic Umbral inspection.

Garou suffer from a dichotomy of thought about biotechnology. It's obvious to most of them that modern medicine is good for humans; it has extended their lifespans and made them healthier throughout their lives. But the less-tolerant tribes say that modern medicine has enabled sickly and weak humans to live who would have perished in harsher times. They believe that this indulgence has allowed the humans to run roughshod over the globe, secure in the belief that no force of nature could permanently harm them as a species. Biotechnology labs and large hospitals serve as loci of conflict among the Twelve Tribes; those labs or hospitals that clearly do the work of the Wyrm have to be destroyed, but Garou disagree about what to do with more mundane facilities. Garou activity regarding such places depends on the local political structure and

spirit world: if traditional, warlike tribes like the Red Talons hold sway, labs and hospitals suffer regular attacks, while if the Children of Gaia are dominant, similar facilities are exempt from monkeywrenching.

Fire Department

Determine whether your city has a paid fire department or a volunteer squad. Professional, paid fire departments are quicker to respond to calls and almost always have better equipment than volunteers do. Pros don't have day jobs that keep them away from the station house, so there's very little delay between a call going out and their arrival on-scene. This is not to disparage volunteer firefighters, of course; they train hard and are dedicated to their second jobs. Also consider the skill of the city's fire investigators. Talented fire investigators can determine an awful lot about the source of a fire, flammables consumed, and the fire's path without using modern technology. When spectroscopy is added into the mix, there's very little that can be hidden from a good fire investigator. Of course, the Garou have an ace in the hole when dealing with mundane investigations — they have Gifts and rites, and access to a rich spirit world.

From a Storytelling standpoint (and a Garou standpoint), the response and skill of firefighters can impact a game in a couple of different ways. First, if the characters are monkeywrenching a facility inside city limits, it's useful to know what kind of firefighters are nearby and what kind of response times they have. In the United States, the typical professional fire company responds to a call within 3 to 4 minutes, a time that includes the entire span from alarm to arrival onsite. So, from the time a fire alarm goes off, monkeywrenching Garou won't have much time; they'd best be sure to do all their damage in a hurry. Secondly, it's entirely possible that a member of the troupe's pack might be a firefighter; it's a profession well suited to the Garou's temperament and resiliency.

Heavy Industry

Manufacturing facilities, whether for basic materials like polystyrene or steel rebar or for more complex products like automobiles, churn out a lot of pollution and damage Gaia over a vast area. Not all manufacturers serve the Wyrm — in fact, almost none of them do. Even the majority of companies that are part of the Pentex conglomerate do not directly advance the Wyrm's agenda on Earth in any obvious fashion. Of course, that doesn't stop the more radical members of the Garou Nation from wanting to destroy them all. That aim might well bring those werewolves into direct conflict with city Garou, who might prefer to

work against polluters through indirect means (the legal system and public exposure) and focus their attacks on direct servants of the Wyrm.

If you want to pose complex moral questions to your players, you might create a polluting heavy industry site that is absolutely critical to the city's economy, either in the short term — like the local power plants; or in the long term — such as Detroit's automakers. Surely, if these places harm Gaia, they need to be shut down, but is it better to attack them directly, or go after them in more subtle fashion? The situation can become more complicated if the Wyrm and Weaver minions of the city don't actively use the industrial sites, preferring more subtle ploys.

Another consideration for story purposes is the designation and development of "brownfields" sites in old industrial cities. These are locations that were poisoned by longtime polluters and are recently rezoned toward commercial or residential development. Such developments are ripe for Wyrm manipulation: in most cities, real estate developers need only to show that there is no obviously harmful chemical residue at the surface or tainting the local groundwater. All sorts of psychoactive, bizarre, or outright poisonous chemicals might exist deep enough that they wouldn't have an obvious or fast effect on workers or residents in the new development. This sort of subtle corruption fits the Wyrm's modus operandi almost perfectly.

Medical Centers

Many cities have half a dozen or more large hospitals spread out throughout town. Hospitals are large employers, and many of their employees are somewhat hardened against the sort of terrible memories that the Delirium calls forth. This is especially true for the staff of the emergency department.

The Delirium

At your discretion, hospital employees who are routinely exposed to horrific trauma may act as though their Willpower is one or two points higher for purposes of coping with the Delirium. This might not be appropriate for all emergency personnel — very few of them run into monstrous half-wolves — but particularly steely nurses and EMTs could well brush off the appearance of a Garou if they're focused on an ongoing trauma. On the other hand, you might simply want to provide such workers with higher Willpower traits, which is entirely appropriate for their line of work.

A werewolf in Homid or Lupus form still detects as pure human or wolf to modern DNA testing and spectroscopy (Glabro, Crinos and Hispo blood samples tend to be classified as “contaminated”). But a Garou’s powers of regeneration can complicate medical records, considering that some wounds on their records won’t even be present as scars if they make repeat visits to the ER. With the rise of corporate style hospitals under the control of vast conglomerates, it is nearly impossible for a Garou to know where his medical records might end up. Therefore most Garou find it imperative to avoid hospitals and medical centers at all costs. Garou can certainly seek out the services of Kin-folk doctors, nurses, or midwives, but this should be informally done, not handled through the admitting desk of a hospital.

As places where plenty of humans die, spirits of death and ghosts lurk in nearly every hallway of a hospital. Garou who wish to commune with the spirits of the dead could do worse than investigating the Umbra of a hospital. Silent Striders, with their affinity for ghosts, find themselves besieged in the area around a hospital, as the dead beg them to resolve one last task or hungrily latch onto them. Speaking of the dead, hospital blood banks also attract vampires, beings that the Garou always need to watch out for.

Museums & Libraries

The classic comic book use for museums is as a storage house for old, sinister artifacts with hidden powers that are conveniently stolen by the wrong people at a critical juncture. This can work in a Werewolf game, as well. It’s completely plausible that an old fetish is uncovered on an archaeological dig, and whatever shapeshifter faction finds out about it decides they’d like it for themselves. This story hook shouldn’t be overused, but it’s a classic for good reason.

But museums are also places to contact the more benevolent spirits associated with human civilization. Whether the museum is dedicated to art or history, it attracts a certain kind of visitor, someone that’s usually interested in learning and respectful of the exhibits. A museum can serve as a perfect place to contact ancestor-spirits, spirits of knowledge or art, spirits of extinct animals, or perhaps even a City Father or Mother. The Bone Gnawer camp of Frankweilers is the most obvious group that takes advantage of this spiritual connection, but sneaking into a museum to enact a Rite of Summoning is a powerful scene for any pack — even Red Talons. After all, how better to



summon the spirit of mighty Mammoth than to be touching the bones of one of his kin?

Libraries can usually be used in much the same way as museums, save that the emphasis is less on artifacts and more on books. They're repositories of information that can seriously benefit many Knowledge checks, and some might even have a few tomes of occult lore down on the shelves. And if a character discovers a copy of the Chronicle of the Black Labyrinth in the stacks, who else might have read that particular bit of blasphemy? A college student? A librarian? A mage? Possibilities, possibilities....

Military Bases

Military bases fill many roles in a city chronicle. First of all, in some modern fiction, a city's military base has at least one cache of top-notch weaponry and high-tech gear. This is not realistic for some minor bases, so as Storyteller you'll want to decide whether the local military base leans more toward the realistic or the fantastic. A base that does have a lot of weaponry and cool gear may become something of a battleground for the city's supernatural population, as different factions try to get enough influence over the base that they can sneak equipment off-base for use in their own interneccine battles.

Military activity can also have an impact on the city's spirit world. Few bases in the United States (other than Pearl Harbor and bases that date back to the Civil War) have seen direct military activity, so it isn't as though the mere existence of the Rock Island Arsenal in the Quad Cities will yank the Umbra of that metropolitan area closer to the Plain of Battle. But the regimentation and strict hierarchy of the military are strong signals to the Weaver's spirits, and no doubt plenty of Epiphlings of order and the chain of command thrive in the Umbra of military bases.

Police

The average police response time in the United States is about ten minutes from emergency call to the officers arriving on scene; as above, with fire departments, the length of that response time can be critical to Garou engaged in illegal or semi-legal activity within city limits. Leadership of the police department is often determined by direct election; the Chief of Police, while under the city's mayor, doesn't always have to report to the mayor if he's an independently elected official. As Storyteller, you might exploit that difference for your chronicle; perhaps the mayor is a law-and-order crusader while the chief of police is a corrupt thrall of the Wyrm. Or the other way around.

Police officers are not combat-trained soldiers. Even SWAT teams aren't well prepared to face Garou.

Should the troupe's pack go up against these people in direct combat, remember that most police officers are vulnerable to the Delirium and will flee or panic rather than fight Garou intelligently. However, the average city's police force has a good number of talented investigators and when they want to find the real culprit behind a crime they can make a remarkably good stab at it. Watch a few episodes of your preferred gritty TV crime drama to get an idea of the kind of legwork and investigation police in the World of Darkness likely go through. A driven, intelligent, and experienced investigator can make a great foil for your troupe's pack.

Of course, this is the World of Darkness, which means that corruption within the police force is expected and common. Corruption doesn't necessarily imply Wyrm-taint — there are dozens of sources of easy money for a dishonest cop to take advantage of, and not all will leave the same spiritual mark. Bribes offered to overlook drug deals or organized crime are one thing, but there are also bribes from politicians or corporate executives for officers to look in one direction, or from nosy reporters asking that the cop look in another direction entirely. You can use the still-living husk of a police department riddled by internal corruption to represent all sorts of things thematically in your city — is the city itself representative of this kind of internal decay, or are there powerful supernatural (perhaps undead) forces at play within the city's infrastructure?

Poor Neighborhoods

It's tempting to suggest that a city's poor neighborhoods are dominated by minorities and immigrants, but that's far from the truth in most cities. Poor neighborhoods are just as diverse as the middle-class and upper-class neighborhoods — if not more diverse, as minorities and immigrants have a harder time with upward mobility, especially in the World of Darkness.

Poor doesn't necessarily mean violent or criminal — the majority of those near the poverty line in any given city are peaceful people who have no interest in harming others or taking what isn't theirs. But in the World of Darkness, people of all classes are edgy and desperate, and no one is more desperate than someone on the very bottom of the social ladder in a dark city oppressed by lurking creatures of the night. Gangs are more prevalent in the World of Darkness than they are in the real world, and organized crime has a stronger foothold in every city. To top it off, governmental reforms put a lot of violently mentally unstable people back onto the street in the last few years.

So while living in a poor neighborhood might have its advantages, and while the majority of people

the Garou might run into in such a neighborhood would be hardworking and decent, the troupe's pack is probably more likely to run into trouble in a poor neighborhood than a well-off one. Thankfully for the Garou, unless they encounter a nest of Wyrm-ridden foes, the typical humans they encounter in such an area are vulnerable to the Delirium and are no match for a werewolf in a stand-up fight.

Bone Gnawers tend to act as social glue in poor neighborhoods they choose to live in; despite the Gnawers' status as the eternal omega wolf of the great pack of the Garou, the average Bone Gnawer is tougher than any human he runs into. Add in the fact that the Gnawers are incredibly resourceful and their Theurges have plenty of street wisdom, and packs of Bone Gnawers can easily hold a small urban community together against forces that might otherwise pull it apart.

Schools

A game centered on a pack of low-rank Garou is likely to have a few characters that, if they were human, would still be attending school every day. And in your chronicle it might work out for the best if some or all students were still in school. The entertainment potential of the juxtaposition between fighting evil and the mundanity of study hall and pep rallies is worth considering — think of Buffy the Wyrm-Slayer and you've got the right idea.

Monkeywrenching Garou would do well to remember just how much personal information is held in school records — addresses, social security numbers, medical information, photocopies of parents' proof of address (or, at private school, parents' financial records) can all be had by breaking into the school district's central records facility.

On a less pleasant note, the Defiler Wyrm takes particular enjoyment in the suffering of innocent children or adolescents. Wyrmish cults, Black Spiral Dancers or other pawns of the Defiler may look at a school as something of a hunting ground for potential victims. Remember to keep your players' sensibilities in mind before you explore this avenue, but few things illustrate the corrupt nature of the Bane hierarchy better than their ability to feed on crimes of this magnitude.

Zoos

Probably the first thing that comes to mind when the zoo is mentioned in a **Werewolf** context is "urban wolf Kinfolk." And true, that is one potential use for a zoo, even if the wolves in a zoo aren't necessarily going to produce the most well-adjusted lupus offspring. It's also a use that isn't restricted to the Garou Nation —

Black Spiral Dancers may try to maintain "stock" in the zoo, as might other Fera. Of course, the zoo is a fairly obvious place to stake out for shapeshifter involvement; even if there is a Balam in the city, he probably knows that his enemies might be watching the jaguar exhibit fairly closely. The same goes true for werewolves — a vampire that suspects werewolves in the area will probably devote at least a little bit of resources to keep an eye on the local zoo to make sure no wolves are hopping the fence either way.

A zoo is also a potential place to contact various animal spirits; a Galliard seeking to learn Eye of the Cobra might want to stake out the reptile house to find a spirit teacher. The downside, of course, is that the Weaver unavoidably has some presence in any zoo, and local animal spirits may be a little "off" for the local influence. Furthermore, a zoo might be a handy source for materials that have useful spirit resonance; if your might-boosting fetish needs a little buffalo hair bound into it to appease the spirit, there's no better place to find a Cape buffalo in North America.

Finally, a zoo is an excellent place to make contacts, and a superb place for human Kinfolk, purely in the interests of veterinary medicine. With all these factors in mind, it's fairly obvious that while it's no substitute for actual wilderness, a zoo is a valuable resource for urban septs, as well as for visiting packs.

Parks

In many ways, a park is where the residents of a city go to actually breathe for a little while. Although a park isn't immune to the pollution and general problems of the urban environment, such problems are somewhat lessened there. People relax, walk their dogs, play games and generally have a more positive experience than they do at work. This spiritual sense of well-being can rub off on the Penumbra of a park, giving Gaian or Wyld spirits just that extra bit of strength to resist both Weaver and Wyrm.

On the other hand, parks see their fair share of pain, particularly at night. In the World of Darkness, the ghosts of people who were murdered or buried there may haunt a park. Some awareness groups draw chalk outlines on the sidewalk where women were raped, to remind others just how real a problem this is; each outline might appear in the Penumbra as well. When even parks are places of potential danger and taint, the chronicle gains an exceptional edge.

A rare few parks are so well designed that they can actually support or even hide a Garou sept. The most famous example is New York City's Central Park, a huge park designed by the Bone Gnawer Kinfolk Frederick Law Olmstead. These parks lie

under continual siege, invaded by ever-increasing numbers of humans each year and likely under the scrutiny of the local vampires to boot. Such a place could be the focus, or at least the starting point, for an entire chronicle.

Suburbs

There's a natural mistrust between suburban residents and city residents, but each depends on the other. Those in the city tend to think of the suburbs as empty, soul-numbing places where the only thing to do is go to the mall; suburban residents fear the city as too violent a place to spend time outside of the work-day. Both are wrong — the suburbs have life, and the city has peace — but in the World of Darkness the stereotypes are more accurate.

In a *Werewolf* chronicle, the suburbs represent safety — or, more properly, the illusion of safety. Suburbs are not inherently safer than cities, and the Wyrm can hide in suburban neighborhoods. Gaia and the Wyld are almost entirely absent in the suburbs, despite the greenery — the ranch house on a .9 acre plot has a lush yard and beautiful garden primarily because the energies of life are subverted and redirected by chemicals and tools.

The Garou often ignore the suburbs, concentrating their attention either on the heart of the city — where the Weaver and Wyrm are both strong — and on the rural and wilderness sectors — where the Garou are strong. The suburbs lie somewhat between, and shape the hearts and souls of those humans raised there. While not the most important battlefield, they shouldn't be wholly overlooked.

Universities

University settings are familiar to many players of *Werewolf*, and this familiarity can provide a good touch point with which to play up the differences between the World of Darkness and the real world. You can couple that with the theme of exclusion and being an outcast that comes of being a werewolf to show university life through a dark and cynical lens. In this view, many college athletes and members of fraternities and sororities (the "in-crowds") are dark, cliquish villains-in-training; they are members of Ivy League secret societies, date rapists, and abusive drunken marauders.

Garou won't find forces of the Wyrm lurking in the bowels of a fraternity house (well, they *probably* won't...), but they are likely to find the influence of the Weaver and Wyrm elsewhere on campus. Campus research labs are rarely well-secured, but often raise the Gauntlet quite high as they beat away the spirit world and

invoke the Weaver's mechanistic worldview to explain all that goes on. Illegal and unethical research may cause a biology lab to build up a mild Wyrm-taint, one made stronger with less ethical, cruel research or the outright attention of Wyrm-spirits.

Wealthy Neighborhoods

Given the collective attitude of the Garou toward material wealth and its impact on Gaia, only a few — the Silver Fangs, perhaps the Shadow Lords and Glass Walkers — live in a wealthy neighborhood themselves. For most werewolves, a trip into a wealthy part of town is one undertaken for a story-driven purpose. Generally a ritzy neighborhood is in your game either to show off a particular Storyteller character's wealth and influence, or to provide a target for monkeywrenching, kidnapping, or similar attacks against a wealthy enemy.

What sorts of fashionable neighborhoods does your city have? Ritzy high-rise apartment buildings lead to different sorts of stories than suburban enclaves with gated driveways. Wealthy city apartment buildings concentrate dozens if not hundreds of people into one place, have high security but tightly interconnected systems — electricity, computer networking, sewage, and heat are all distributed throughout the building. Enterprising summoners can use that to their advantage — a net spider with the Control Electrical Systems or Short Out Charms (see *Werewolf*, p. 238-9) can easily dance through several computer systems in one apartment building looking for the one it needs, for instance. Several Glass Walker Gifts such as Power Surge, Elemental Favor, or Universal Interface (from *Tribebook: Glass Walkers*) as well as Weaver charms like those in the Appendix can affect whole buildings at once with a spectacular success (5 or more successes — assume that 3 or more successes will suffice to hit an entire floor of a building). Entry to these buildings is tightly controlled, with the only points of access being the front door (which surely has at least one security guard), the roof (locked and alarmed), or an underground parking garage (access by key or electronic security system).

Suburban enclaves with large houses, big yards, and high security provide other kinds of obstacles, and other kinds of benefits. Anyone in the World of Darkness with a big home is sure to have a security system. Only the wealthiest humans (Resources 5+ and Influence 3+) will have security guards on-site round the clock, and even most of them will just have a bodyguard or two. Only powerful pawns of the Wyrm are likely to have trained security guards available.

Police also patrol these neighborhoods closely; Garou should expect a police response to any loud or violent activity in five minutes or less (roll a die and divide by two, if you wish to choose at random, but it's probably best to tie the police response time to the needs of the story, and have the cops show up when it's dramatically appropriate).

Bars & Nightclubs

Finally, bars and nightclubs are probably the most popular venues for an urban story. Obviously, they're places for characters to go and look cool for a bit, to impress the ladies (or lads) and perhaps relax. They're also hunting grounds for vampires (and also to some extent, for Banes and fomori), which makes them strong candidates for sites of conflict. The "fight in the nightclub/bar" is a staple of urban action movies, and a creative Storyteller can find plenty of savage, bloody ways to introduce werewolves into the mix.

Then again, since Garou can see the deeper spirituality of things, these hangouts might not be quite as much fun. A nightclub or bar can be a way to emphasize the more decadent side of city life — the young of a city, slowly killing themselves with drugs or alcohol in an attempt to somehow enjoy life without having to actually live it. Those who go to

clubs for sex place no meaning on the act, and sometimes even violate their partners just to get their jollies — date rape drugs are disgustingly common in the World of Darkness. At the same time, a nightclub can showcase some of the frenetic energy of a city, tinged with desperation.

Finally, it's not outside the realm of possibility that a few rare nightclubs (no more than one in any city) cater explicitly to a certain supernatural clientele. A Glass Walker sept might have a particular club within their bawn, as a place where Kin and Garou can mingle and unwind — or a few vampires may have staked out a club as their exclusive feeding ground. Storytellers who enjoyed the opening scene of *Blade* can probably figure out what to do with the latter....

Real Cities vs. the World of Darkness

This may seem obvious to even the most casual reader, but cities in the real world aren't nearly as terrible as cities in the World of Darkness. When you first start to formulate your city chronicle (or city-based stories in a broader chronicle) you must decide how realistic you want your city to be. Neither choice below is wrong; each one simply has different demands



and will present different challenges and themes to your troupe. Both choices below are rather broad, and there's plenty of room for variation within each—and if you run a city-hopping chronicle, you should definitely vary the feel of your cities, differentiating them from one another (see "Many Cities," below).

Dark Cities

In the very darkest cities, the bleakest tropes of the World of Darkness are front and center. There are no good guys in this place: There is very little light. Everything is in shades of gray, and the grays aren't too bright. Protagonists—the troupe's pack—may be the only good people in town, but it is more likely that they have personal demons of their own, and are only able to achieve good ends after great personal sacrifice. These cities are entirely in-theme for a Werewolf game on the cusp of the Apocalypse. Cities are infestations of the Weaver and Wyrm, blighted scabs on the surface of Gaia, roiling with the stink and filth of millions of apes all obsessed with killing one another to get to the top of the heap. They are terrible places, and the Red Talons might well be right that it's time to restart a more vicious and permanent Impergium just to scrub them from the surface of the universe.

This sort of city is most appropriate for a chronicle that doesn't spend too much time in civilization. A pack full of Red Talons, or other Garou of the deep wilderness, might find the city to be this dark. There's a skeleton in every closet and a monster in every neighborhood, if not every family. Use these kinds of cities as hostile places full of enemies. Organizations from the police to the PTA are dangerous for the Garou, either wanting to exterminate them for "public safety" or to "help" them into hospitals. City tribes and city septs are under siege; Pattern spiders infest the Umbra and Wyrmspawn infect every squalid tenement apartment. You could set a chronicle entirely in such a city, with urban Garou, but in all likelihood it would be a short-run game. Stretching it out too long defies plausibility (the characters would surely be killed eventually in such a place) and defies your players' tolerance for an extremely bleak and gloomy setting.

So this kind of city isn't very conducive to running a fully urban chronicle. A pack of Glass Walkers, Bone Gnawers, and their hangers-on would have their hands too full just trying to stay alive in such a hellhole to get any of Gaia's work done there. After a decade of such activity, even the most progressive werewolves might



agree that the cities must be destroyed to save Gaia. Although an unrelentingly hostile city is entirely in-theme for a chronicle whose point is that the cities are hostile and awful places, scale back on the gloom for a game that takes place in a city all the time.

Instead, in a dark city game that focuses on the city, let there be some points of light. Innocents, idealists, and children all bring hope to such a game. One of the real advantages to brightening the contrast a little bit is that you can throw mystery into your game. In an unrelentingly dark city, there is no doubt that there are dark misdeeds going on down at the hospital on the edge of the projects. In a more typical World of Darkness city, there *might* be bad things going on in there, or the doctors and nurses might really have the best interests of their patients at heart. It's impossible to know without investigating, and that makes generating your stories much easier.

“Realistic” Cities

You might prefer to tune your city more toward reality — or at least, more toward the sort of reality seen in modern television dramas like *Law & Order* or *Homicide*. Here the shades of gray run across a more varied spectrum, although still erring toward the darker side. (*Werewolf* is a horror game, after all.) The most obvious advantage of this approach is that the players have more investment in the setting. If they actually care about the inhabitants of a city and believe that there are plenty of good people in residence, they'll be more inclined to stick their necks out and make the city a better place. The downside is that players may get a touch more complacent, and a bit less used to dealing with any truly bleak or dark elements of the chronicle.

Chronicles like this are easy enough to run; the best resource you have is the current media. Newspapers, headlines, TV urban dramas and the like are all sources of inspiration, and don't need to be exaggerated all that much. And if you decide you'd rather have the game be a bit darker as you play, it's easy enough to subtly intensify the mood. Such an approach even has the advantage of basic story construction — things get more intense as you reach a climax. What could be better?

Urban Legends

Urban legends represent the folklore of the modern day. In the World of Darkness, the folklore of ancient days turns out to be truer than anyone would realize; it stands to reason, then, that modern-day folklore would also have a strong grain of truth to it. It can be entertaining to turn urban legendry into horror for purposes of an urban *Werewolf* story.

A good way to make sure that the pack doesn't pay too much attention to initial reports and urban legends is to introduce these kinds of rumors and freakish stories regularly over time. If you just drop a single urban legend into a game's run, it's going to call attention to itself by your emphasis on it, but if you regularly make reference to new urban legends, such as the story of the guy who had his kidneys removed and left in a tub of ice, or the “WELCOME TO THE WORLD OF AIDS” story, your players and their characters will start to disregard the legends — at least, until something causes the pack to confront them.

It isn't terribly hard to develop an urban legend story into a good *Werewolf* session. First, look at a book or website on urban legends, and skim around for appropriate seeming stories. Stories of mysterious strangers, corporations that are polluting the environment or introducing strange chemicals into their products for no apparent reason, or violent attacks with a weird nonsensical element to them are all very appropriate for *Werewolf* urban games. After reading a few tales, figure out how these stories could be literally true in the World of Darkness. They don't all have to be manifestations of the Wyrm or the dark parts of the spirit world — mysterious strangers or violent attackers could just as easily be deranged ordinary humans as anything else. But don't be afraid to use the supernatural when it is appropriate; it is an important part of the setting.

A good “mysterious stranger” urban legend is the tale of kidnappers who seize children in department stores and shopping malls, take them into bathrooms, cut or dye their hair, change the kids' clothes, and run off with them. In a *Werewolf* game, these kidnappers might be an epidemic, seizing children to use for dark purposes. The child might be sold to childless couples elsewhere in the world, transformed into fomori, or sacrificed to fuel some dark ritual. Turning this legend on its head, it is entirely possible that Garou might use the same tactic to kidnap youths on the cusp of the First Change.

A “strange chemical” tale could be any old saw about an ordinary household product causing cancer, sterility, or brain damage because of an unusual — but entirely legal — additive in it, like sodium laureth sulfate in shampoo or aspartame in just about anything. You need to be careful with this kind of story. While it's tempting, as Storyteller, to put poisons in every square inch of a household, all thanks to Wyrm infestation of big business, doing that sort of thing too broadly dilutes its impact. You might pick one ostensibly benign chemical whose FDA approvals have all

been rigged and whose damaging effects have been covered up by generous legal settlements that include gag orders. Then decide why the Wyrm's servants let the substance into general production: sane creatures will not introduce an overtly dangerous chemical into the general population without a darned good reason. The reason might be entirely mundane: Perhaps the chemical does some miscellaneous task (flavor or coloring) much more cheaply than a more responsible alternative. Or perhaps the Vice President for product development is insane or devoted to Urge Wyrms that crave random destruction? Does the additive slowly turn people violent, or create fomori when appropriately triggered?

When you do introduce a "strange chemical" urban legend, do it slowly and subtly. The characters should initially scoff at hearing about another urban legend about the dangers of trichloroethyltoluene (or whatever), but over time, a series of crimes, disease, and strange behaviors by a wide range of people lead the pack to realize that the only thing the criminals and victims have in common is their choice of, say, deodorant.

Many Cities

A city-hopping chronicle is certainly an option for the modern Garou. In Europe, as well as in America's northeast, cities are packed closely enough together that a pack of Garou might choose to make a circuit through several cities. Perhaps the pack acts as couriers, taking messages too important to entrust to ordinary mail, the airwaves, or the Internet from city to city. Or they might be somewhat freelance, not attached to any particular sept but doing what they can to help several different septs.

Such a chronicle can be remarkably fun for your players; getting to hit Las Vegas, Hong Kong, Paris and Rio de Janeiro all in the same chronicle is some heady stuff. You can also provide a much greater variety of antagonists in such a chronicle. It might not make sense for the players to meet vampires, fomori, Black Spiral Dancers, Ananasi, Bubasti and Kuei-jin all in the same chronicle if they stay in one city (even if it's San Francisco), but in a traveling chronicle, it's practically expected. However, be warned that this is also going to require a lot more work on your part, in the form of preparation or improvisation (and probably plenty of both). Be sure that you're ready to go the extra mile before starting a chronicle like this; nothing's more disappointing to a player than having a strong chronicle crumble on account of Storyteller burnout.

Portraying Particular Cities

Every city is its own set of choices. The best way to design a city for use in your chronicle is to decide ahead of time what kind of role you want that city to play in your game, but in cases where the city is going to be the largest part of the chronicle's setting, the city will have to fill many roles, so the answer to this question won't always help you design the city in game terms. You might want to use your home city, or a city that is very familiar to you and all your players — perhaps your troupe doesn't live in a city, or they all went to college together in a particular metropolis. You might instead prefer to use a different city entirely, one you're less familiar with; or you might want to invent a city out of whole cloth. Guidelines for all of these things can be found below.

Transforming Your Hometown

One of the most entertaining choices you can make when formulating a city for your chronicle is to use your hometown. However, this can also be a difficult choice, for unless you're running the chronicle for people from out of town, at a convention or via the Internet, your players are sure to know the town roughly as well as you do.

Thankfully, you have a lot of resources at hand, starting with the city itself. As you're preparing your chronicle, hop in a car (or on a bus) and drive around town a few times. Deliberately go places you don't ordinarily go. Find out what the city's industrial cor-

Common Sense

If you go out driving or walking in any city, day or night, use common sense and courtesy. Don't walk through dangerous parts of town alone; don't drive through dangerous parts of town at night. Don't take written notes while you drive. By the same token, don't walk through ritzy parts of town with torn jeans and a FUCK THE POLICE T-shirt. Do your game's research in an unobtrusive manner. If you have questions about the part of town you're in and you want to talk to passersby or people who work in the area, ask them in a polite and restrained manner, and don't approach anybody who you wouldn't feel safe talking to at any other time. Don't interrupt their work, if they're working. Common sense will get you a lot, and using your physical senses will help keep you safe.

ners are like; get an idea where the ritzy neighborhoods are, as well as the bad or dangerous neighborhoods. Once you've done that, get out and walk around town. Find a few places that seem to be the city's heartbeat. In most cities there's a central business district that is busy on weekdays, and a few entertainment or club districts that are busier on weekends and evenings. If you can, visit both areas during their busy times—and if you're really feeling enterprising, visit both areas during their slack times, too. Get an idea of the contrast between the city when it's alive and the city when it's resting.

If you have questions about particular areas—say you see a building that interests you, or a monument, or you just want to know the history of a corner of the city, you can always just ask. Go into an established place—an older market or diner works great for this—and ask someone who works there. Don't interrupt them as they're working, of course, and you'll probably get funny looks if you try to explain **Werewolf: The Apocalypse** and your real purpose in being there. Just explain that you're working on a short story or novel set in your hometown, and you're thinking of using this part of the city as one of the locations, and could the person take a few minutes and relate any stories they might have about the area? You'll probably get more information than you can use in your game.

If you're looking for a good World of Darkness feel, there's really nothing quite as good as walking around outside on a night of the full moon. You might try and do this near one of your city's heavy-industry zones, to really play up a sense of alienation in the face of heavy construction and pollution. In the heart of most cities, notice that you can't see the stars, and you can hardly see the full moon; many Garou in such a situation would feel that they were cut off from the pulsing heart of the Tellurian.

After you get a good general feel for the nature of your city, it's time to start digging. If you want to run a game that's at all realistic, you may find that hooking some of your chronicle's history into the real world's history will lend a lot of verisimilitude to the game.

Start with the obvious stuff. Start reading your local newspaper. Concentrate on the "Local News" section. Find out what local politics are like, figure out what corporations dominate the economic scene. Who are the five largest employers in town? Consider if any of them would be suitable Wyrm-ridden companies in the World of Darkness, or if they'd be suitable targets for hostile takeover by Wyrm-driven corporations. You're not likely to see particular real-world companies named as Wyrm pawns in **Werewolf** source material (for what should be obvious reasons) but there's no

reason that you can't have real world companies as pawns of evil in your chronicle. Doing so will lend verisimilitude, and make the events of your chronicle all the more memorable.

After the newspaper and that sort of info, talk to the press at the local university. Not the school newspaper—the university's in-house publisher, if they have one. If they don't, see if anyone in the History department has a specialization in the history of the local area. What you're looking for here is a decent book on the history of your region. This can come in handy when you're trying to flesh out the local supernatural population. Many bookstores also carry such books in the "Local Interest" section.

After you have the basic information in your head, there are plenty of ways to build the city you want to set your chronicle in. A few methods are listed below: You can build your setting from the city's real-world history; you can build the city from a theme you might have in mind; you can build it out of a network of social relationships; or out of the city's spiritual map. In all likelihood you will work from a combination of the below techniques, so they are all worth a look.

Building the City: Historically

Once you have a handle on the history, you can build the Garou population from a historical basis and move forward in time by answering some straightforward questions. If the city's in America, when was it settled? What was there first? Does it make any sense for there to be historical caerns of the Pure Ones (the Wendigo, Uktene, and Croatan) around? If you're in the rest of the world, take a look at your region's history over the long term. It's pretty clear from the rulebook and various Tribebooks which tribes associate themselves with which ethnic groups; if there is a preponderance of a particular ethnic group in your community, either now or historically, that might suggest that local caerns would be dominated by certain tribes.

From the historical state of the caern, you can extrapolate forwards. As different peoples move in and out of a region, Kinfolk move with them. An influx of Silver Fang Kinfolk doesn't necessarily mean that Silver Fangs will come to dominate the local sept. Garou born to Silver Fang Kinfolk will not become Silver Fangs unless adopted by Falcon, after all. However, some Garou move around alongside their Kinfolk, so as human populations ebb and flow, the Garou inhabitants of local septs might similarly change. However, particularly in Europe, caerns are ancient things with strong spirits and old traditions. Even though the Shadow Lords' Kin might move

around, the Shadow Lords themselves are not welcome to join every sept on the continent.

Finally, look at the history of the last fifty years in your city. What have been the big changes through the end of the Second World War, the Cold War, the Information Revolution, and so on? If the city is in Europe or eastern Asia, did the World Wars affect it directly? Wartime paints bloody pictures on the Umbrial landscape nearby, and ghosts of war may interact with the nature spirits of the local area. Garou in cities directly affected by war may find the city's Penumbra to be uncomfortably close to realms like Scar or the Field of Battle. In America, the World Wars and the Cold War led to, among other things, a great expansion of the military and the country's nuclear research.

Building the City: Thematically

If the city isn't intended as the center of your game, or if you've got a strong theme in mind for the city that will be the focus of your game, you may wish to build the city theme first, and extrapolate from that theme into the concrete.

Of course, there are dozens of possible themes you could apply to any given city in a chronicle. A short list might include Decay, Oppression, Boom and Bust, Tradition versus Innovation, War, and Sprawl.

Decay might be used for cities from Cleveland or Gary, Indiana—America's Rust Belt—to crumbling parts of the old Soviet Union. For Garou, the Silver Fangs are the exemplar of decay: They once were mighty and fearsome and now are doddering and a little mad. A Silver Fang sept that's fading in power in a city like Pittsburgh or Kiev would be nicely representative of the Decay theme.

Oppression as a facet of a city is common all over the world, but you might choose Los Angeles or Singapore as particularly prominent examples of cities, which oppress the freedoms of some or all of their citizens. From the Garou perspective, nearly any tribe can act as an oppressor of its Kinfolk and cubs, and those tribes that are tightly or violently tied to old traditions might serve this thematic purpose. A tight-fisted and controlling sept of Shadow Lords in Sarajevo could work as the first step to designing a city to showcase Oppression.

Boom and Bust cities might be at any point in that cycle. Cities like Las Vegas or Dublin are on the "Boom" half of the chart, while Houston or Buffalo nicely characterize the "Bust" half. These cities' rapid rise to prominence and wealth is matched by their rapid fall from grace, leaving behind city blocks and massive gleaming office towers with no inhabitants. There aren't any Garou tribes that explicitly charac-

terize this cycle, but we don't have to restrict ourselves to whole tribes as examples. Imagine a pack of Garou that was named as the Silver Pack as an especially young group, accomplished its great goal, and hasn't done much of note since then. Such a pack would be a great asset to have in town, at least for the prestige, but if they focus too much on their past glories and their reputations and not enough on fighting the war at hand they are sure to be a liability instead.

Tradition versus Innovation conflicts come up in nearly any city, but those in Europe are hit particularly hard. Consider Rome, a city steeped in tradition that is fighting to move past its ancient history and into the 21st century—or, the other side of the conflict, a city like San Francisco, known for its innovation and rapid change, leaving some residents unhappy. The Glass Walkers represent the innovation half of this equation, while conservative tribes like the Black Furies and Wendigo represent traditionalist forces within the Garou Nation. A city like Tokyo with two caerns, one controlled by traditionalist tribes and the other by modernist tribes, would be a good way to emphasize this theme.

War is endemic to the Garou condition, but war is anathema to cities: cities that are particularly emblematic of war, like Hiroshima or Kosovo, are often consumed by that war, and take decades or longer to return to normal. For a war-driven chronicle in a city, you might use the most warlike tribes—the Get of Fenris or the Red Talons—or you might instead use one of the tribes most changed by war, such as the Uktene or Wendigo (or ghosts of the Croatan). You might even focus on the Children of Gaia, who prefer to fight the war on Gaia's foes without raising claw and rifle. A chronicle set among the cities of the Balkans, among the Shadow Lords, Red Talons, and Black Furies in search of a just way to prosecute those responsible for the atrocities of war there while eliminating the taint of the Wyrm as they move from city to city resonates very nicely with this theme. A subset of this theme is a "shadow war" or "cold war," one fought on a very subtle, covert level. Vampires are an obvious antagonist for such stories, as this is exactly the sort of war the Leeches been waging against the Garou for millennia.

Sprawl cities are those that are too huge to easily be summed up into a single City Father or City Mother. These are cities that contain millions of people spread over an enormous area and have both fantastic wealth and mind-boggling poverty, whose rush hours screw up highway traffic patterns for a hundred miles in all directions, like Los Angeles, Mexico City, or Sao Paulo. Such cities are so huge, and so packed with

people, that there's a lot of spiritual energy surging around them: they may contain several caerns to city totems. But the desperation and poverty of sprawl cities lead a lot of those caerns to be corrupted by the powers of darkness. Sprawls are the favored stomping grounds of the Bone Gnawers and Ratkin; you can use the nearly epidemic frequency with which those two groups show up in a sprawl city to help play up the city's vast size and inherent filth.

Building the City: Relationships

You can build up the themes and spirit world of your city based on the political relationships you want to give the city's inhabitants. Pick some factions among the Garou, the humans, and the servants of the Wyrm and Weaver; figure out what their relationships should be and who the noteworthy members of each faction are; and then work out what physical and spiritual resources each individual and faction needs in order to be in the place it's in.

For instance, if you would like a chronicle where the Garou of the city are split into two septs facing off in a kind of cold war, each paying more attention to the danger that the other sept poses than the dangers of the Wyrm and Weaver, you should figure out who leads each sept and what packs are a part of each. Then work out locations for each caern, and the nature of each caern, and then the nature of the conflict between the two septs. Lastly, figure out what forces of the Weaver and/or Wyrm are arrayed to take advantage of this situation, and what will drive them into action. You might want to work out what it would take to get the two septs to work together, or you might want to let that unfold itself during play.

You certainly don't have to make every character in the city into a fully realized, three-dimensional being. The crazy old drunk on the stoop of the pack's apartment building doesn't need to be much more than that. But those Storyteller characters whose activities drive the chronicle — pack and sept leaders, and major antagonists — do need to be fleshed out. Work out their relationships with other major Storyteller characters and with the players' characters; decide the major goals of each character, what resources he has available to accomplish each one, and what lengths he's willing to go to in order to achieve those goals. Don't give your Storyteller characters plans that they can easily achieve with their current resources; otherwise, why wouldn't their goals already have been achieved? Make them need something: those needs are what can drive stories and eventually your whole chronicle.

Building the City: The Spirit World

The final option, other than simply blazing your own trail, is to start with a general idea of the city and then develop a plan for the place's spirit world. From the combination of that general idea and the spirit world, you can extrapolate most of the city's features.

Spirit Denizens

Decide who the major spirits in your city and what their natures are. Spirits aren't like people, not even Garou: the activities of even the freest Wyld-spirit are constrained by its nature and its role on Gaia's surface. To use a simplistic example, spirits of fire are always hostile to spirits of water, and vice versa. Spirits may well have attitudes and behaviors that rational beings might choose to avoid.

One of the most important spirits to consider is the City Father (or City Mother). Not every city has a City Father. The only ones that do are those cities large enough that the population's collective self-image manifests into an Epiphling (or another sort of spirit) that grows over time into a personification of the city. Size isn't the only criterion: the city has to have a personality, something that can be impressed onto the fabric of an existing spirit to make it into a near-person. Sterile suburban bedroom communities, no matter how large, don't manifest City Fathers. Ask yourself this question: What comes to mind when I think of the personality of this city? If the answer is "nothing," then the city probably does not have a parent spirit.

If a particular image does come to mind, though — say an immigrant steelworker in Pittsburgh or an aging Russian looking westward in St. Petersburg — then that individual, or someone like him, should be the City Father at first glance. Subtle bits of the city's history and theme should make their way onto the spirit's form in some fashion. Perhaps the steelworker's name is Magarac; perhaps the aging Russian carries a tattered copy of *The Communist Manifesto* out of long habit.

City Fathers' goals seem pretty clear at first: help the city grow and become healthy. But this can manifest in a lot of ways, and no two City Fathers will approach that overall goal in quite the same way. Most City Fathers are fairly conservative spirits; the traditions and history of the city create them. They don't have the same interest in rapid advances in technology or changes in the city's ethnic makeup as they do in sustaining what's already there (though they're usually quite happy to allow ethnic groups that already populate the city to continue to move in). This isn't as true in cities that have always thrived on change, but even

in those towns, radical change isn't entirely welcome. City Fathers might act directly as totems to a pack of Garou within their domain, and they are sure to direct that pack to pursue the city's overall agenda, even when that conflicts with the war to save Gaia.

The City Father isn't the only major spirit in town. Others include totem spirits to local Garou packs, the totem spirit or spirits of local caerns, powerful independent spirits (like Incarna) that make their home in the area, powerful Wyrm creatures such as Nexus Crawlers, and powerful Weaver-spirits like Chaos Monitors (see **Book of the Weaver**). Plenty of other spiritual entities might exist in the city as well, from corporeal demons to black-hearted wizards and ancient vampires.

As mentioned above, spirits won't always have rational reactions to one another. Spirits who are nominally allied — a bison-spirit that haunts an old Wendigo caern and a Fenris Wolf totem spirit that guards a pack of Get of Fenris who help protect that caern — will not necessarily cooperate, and that will make their Garou charges' lives difficult. Superimposing a spirit-world that is internally consistent over a Garou society that is itself internally consistent can reveal lots of good contradictions — like the example above — that you can use to drive storylines.

Caerns

Pick a few sites in the city or on its outskirts that would seem to have some kind of spiritual power. The most obvious of these are likely those that will be Gaian: Glades and caerns. Quiet and solemn places with a clear connection to the energies of life make excellent Gaian sites. The most obvious of these are secret places hidden deep within large city parks, sanctuaries from the roiling press of humanity. If they are far from the well-traveled trails and paths of a park, and remote from human activity, these sites could make excellent caerns.

There are plenty of other places charged with the positive energy of life. Examples might include:

- An old public school where the staff has always worked to help the students grow as people, rather than trying to fit them into a system.
- A lively business which isn't married to profit to the exclusion of stewardship of the Earth.
- The site of an event of great justice — not merely the apprehension of a criminal, but an act that brought justice to a whole class of people, like the Emancipation Proclamation.
- Truly ancient spiritual sites which still reverberate through the Umbra; these might be old holy grounds from pre-Christian days (or, in the Americas,

the days before the Wyrmbinders) that have since been built over and incorporated into modern cities.

These are by no means the only possibilities: anyplace in a city that's charged with the positive energies of life is a candidate to be a Glade or caern.

After you've picked out likely places for caerns or Glades, decide whether you want just one caern in the city, or a few. In these nights near the Apocalypse, even the largest cities don't boast more than a few caerns. The decision you make here will have a large impact on your chronicle; a few of the results of that decision are listed below.

In a one-caern city, every Garou present is part of the same sept, and therefore part of the same hierarchy. This will lead to more unity of activity on the part of the packs within the city (if there is more than one pack), but it will also result in more peacetime challenges and jockeying for position among the Garou. In a one-caern city, spiritual resources are relatively limited — the caern can't be tapped for Gnosis as often as a wilderness caern could, and its energies have to be split among the entire city's population of Garou. Therefore, Garou in such a city will focus their activities on mundane fights against the Wyrm and Weaver and their minions, rather than on the Umbra and spirit battles. On the bright side, the city's lone caern provides a single very defensible point for the Garou to fall back to in case of emergencies; any concerted attack by Gaia's enemies is sure to encounter a dedicated group of defenders.

If one city sept claims multiple caerns under its domain, the sept leadership is sure to assign at least one pack to safeguard each caern in the city. Additionally, the Garou in such a city are much less likely to be spiritually bereft — it is much easier for them to tap a caern and replenish their Gnosis when they are in great need than it would be for their brethren in a one-caern city. In a multiple-caern city, most of the caerns are Level One caerns, for no Scab has the spiritual fuel necessary to empower multiple caerns beyond a subsistence level. However, that city's werewolves have multiple points of vulnerability to attack. A strong drive by the Weaver or Wyrm against one caern may result in that caern's loss, for the sept cannot bring all of its resources to protect a single caern lest the other powerful sites in town be lost.

If the city has a few septs, then it is much more likely that a given pack will have free access to a particular caern. If each caern has its own sept associated with it — not a certainty — then there will be more traditional sept roles in the city (see the

(Werewolf Storytellers Companion or *Guardians of the Caerns*) than there are Garou to fill them. Garou challenging other Garou for such titles and roles will be correspondingly less common in such a city, for there will be more than enough work to go around. Garou in such a city are much less likely to work together than those in a single-sept city: the leadership of one sept might prefer to move and fight in entirely different directions from the others. The sept leaders might occasionally gather together to coordinate battle plans or settle turf disputes, but they are not likely to work too closely together, due to distrust, territoriality, and a desire for mutual independence. If each caern in the city has its own sept, enemy forces may be able to dislodge the weakest sept from its caern with a surprise strike, but if the Garou cooperate with one another at all after that they may realize that they are collectively under attack, and lend one another packs or individual Garou to help defend their holy sites. If the septs of a city are at war, or simply not inclined to aid one another, the Weaver and Wyrm may be in for a feast of good fortune.

Corruption

Once you have decided what sites the Garou live in and defend, you must decide where their enemies lair. These might be places that were desecrated by the Wyrm or Weaver before the city existed, or otherwise spiritual places that have become corrupted by the wickedness of those two.

Corrupt sites that predate the city are either legendary portals to Malfeas or the site of a great crime against Gaia during prehistory. Perhaps the site is a burial ground for tortured or sacrificed slaves. Most of these kinds of places have long been built over by the modern city; they may be buried hundreds of feet below ground by now, with layers of modern, industrial, renaissance, medieval, and classical cities above them. As a Storyteller, this is a great device — dozens of books and movies have shown bizarre ancient cultic rituals taking place deep underground, and there is established precedent in *Werewolf* for Hives and Thunderwyrms to be deep in the earth.

Newer corrupt sites have come about since the city has taken its current shape. They certainly are not restricted to being below ground — in fact, the sorts of sterile and lifeless “clean rooms” that one might find within a manufacturer of cutting-edge technology is the perfect center for the Weaver’s power. And the idea of bloody Wyrm rituals taking place in the penthouse apartment of the highest skyscraper in town is a very appropriate one to drop into your chronicle.

It is worthwhile to look at your chosen city’s history and find one or two particularly heinous crimes

—either against individuals or against the community as a whole — that could erupt into Wyrm pits if appropriately tended to. Then decide which of them, if any, have had the appropriate care. It’s inappropriate for every murder site — or even every atrocity site — to have become a site of power for the Wyrm, but a good handful will provide an array of locations for enemies of your troupe’s pack to use. Additionally, there could be one or two former caerns in the city that have been taken by forces of the Wyrm in the last century or so as the Apocalypse has gotten closer.

Contested and Neutral Sites

Some locations in the city might make perfectly good caerns if awakened and dedicated appropriately; along similar lines, they might be useful to the Wyrm or the Weaver if suitably bastardized. For whatever reason, they haven’t been fully claimed by either side yet. Perhaps they’re hidden or were just discovered. In that case, the discoverer is sure to do his best to keep the place a secret until it can be dedicated to his side of the War. If both sides have just learned about such a site, they may be cautiously probing in preparation for an assault to claim the site as their own. By contrast to the above scenarios, the location could be under the control of a force that neither the Garou nor their enemies can sway — local wizards, vampires, the Church, or others might have such control. In such a case your best choice is to pick a foil you want to introduce into the chronicle and give that individual control over the desired resource.

Other Cities

If you’re planning to set your game in a city not your own, direct research — walking around town — is considerably harder, but thankfully in the modern age libraries and the Internet can help you get the off for a walking tour of any major city in the world. City guidebooks for tourists can also be quite helpful in this regard, and so can Internet archives of the city’s major newspaper. Checking to see what stories make the Internet version of a city’s paper is a good litmus test to see what stuff the city’s residents will find important enough to check on via the Web.

Choose a city that no one else in the troupe knows better than you do. If you pick a place that the whole group is equally ignorant about, you’ll do fine. But if you pick a city that one player grew up in and you’ve only visited once or twice, you will have to either co-opt that player or risk being called out for mistakes and regularly breaking that player’s suspension of disbelief. Admittedly, any player who wastes game time nitpicking Denver street intersections is someone with whom you need to have a talking-to anyway, but it’s best not

to expose oneself to such problems. There are two primary solutions to this problem. First, find out what cities your troupe is collectively familiar with, and steer your game to a location outside of that list. Second, explain to your troupe that this game takes place in the World of Darkness, not the real world, and that if werewolves are out there secretly fighting a war to preserve the spirit of life in the world, having a bookstore at the wrong address in St. Louis isn't worth arguing about.

Inventing a City

You don't have to use the real world at all when building your city. Fiction authors, comic book, television and movie writers all invent cities and locations whenever they feel the need. In cases where a city isn't outright invented, the city might just be blurred - a storyline might take place in a generic city in no particular state. Alternately, you might choose to pluck a city out of popular fiction — say, Batman's Gotham City or Scott Turow's Kindle County. Particularly in games where you focus on the wilderness and the fight to save Gaia, the fact that a particular bit of your story lurches into a city doesn't mean it has to take the pack into a real city.

Using an invented city frees you up entirely from the dictates of the real world. You can cherry-pick traits and tendencies, invent a history, and not worry too much about the city's interaction with the rest of the world, or whether the map you've downloaded from the Internet is as good as it could be. You can also build World of Darkness elements into the city from the start, ensuring that the myths and monsters are consistent with the game's setting. Conversely, using an invented city means a lot of creative work for you as Storyteller. With a real city, you can superimpose World of Darkness elements over top of an already existing structure, whereas with an invented city, you have to create that structure and then lay World of Darkness elements on top of it.

Historical Cities

You might choose to run an urban Werewolf game at just about any point in history; while certain themes become more or less important depending on your choice of city and date, the Garou do have common threads running through their entire history that you can always call upon for inspiration. The damaged Triat is always a threat to Gaia, though more so in later days than ancient times; the Garou committed great crimes against Gaia and Her children in the Impergium and the War of Rage. Below is a short list of historical cities you might choose, with a few notes about the role

Garou might play in them, as well as the city's Umbrascape during that time period. Obviously these are only suggestions; feel free to run any city with whatever themes seem most appropriate to your chronicle.

Classical Times

Rome

By the classic World of Darkness formulation, vampires dominated Republican and Imperial Rome. That leaves you with two choices for a Werewolf game. First, toss out the vampires, because this isn't **Vampire** anyway, or second, leave some vampires in Rome and add plenty of Garou. Many Garou fought against the expansion of Rome over most of Europe, allying themselves with the barbarian tribes of Gaul. Those werewolves that did live in the city fought the Wyrm's pernicious influence where they could, though they obviously failed in the cases of Caligula, Nero, Commodus and similarly rotten emperors. City Garou characters might fight against the oppression and tyranny of emperors like those, or they might face off against the aforementioned vampires for control of the city. Classical Rome's City Father probably bears a striking resemblance to Julius Caesar, though the passage of years probably smears his features out into a pastiche of the typical toga-clad emperor.

Dark Ages (c. 1230CE)

No European cities of the Long Night between the fall of Rome and the Renaissance era can quite recapture the glory of classical Rome. The largest cities in the western world in this era are Constantinople, Baghdad, and Cairo. For more detail on running Werewolf during the Dark Ages, see **Dark Ages: Werewolf**.

Constantinople

As the center of the Eastern church and one of the largest cities in the world, Constantinople wields an enormous amount of temporal and spiritual power. Appropriately, its City Father is a long-bearded man in the robes of a prelate of the Eastern Orthodox Church. Constantinople is large enough that nearly any city adventure that Garou could go on, could take place within its walls.

Baghdad and Cairo

Baghdad and Cairo, learned Muslim cities, are two of the largest cities in the known world during the 13th century. The City Father of Cairo is likely a pastiche of the ancient Pharaohs — no doubt some whisper that he is a Pharaoh incarnate — with a more modern Muslim. The City Father of Baghdad may well be the

worst and most stereotypical being that the Garou of the Middle East are likely to see: a fat and wealthy merchant, or perhaps a noble *djinn*. The traditional tribes of Europe are not often seen here in the Middle East; instead, the Silent Striders, Glass Walkers, and Children of Gaia are common, and more than a few Black Furies and Stargazers make their homes in Baghdad. The sourcebook Veil of Night for Vampire: the Dark Ages has history and culture information on a number of cities of Medieval Islam; though it is pointed at Leeches rather than Garou it may prove useful if you decide to take this route with your chronicle.

The Far East

In the 13th century, the Mongol Empire dominates most of Asia; even China is subject to Mongol rule. The Mongols are not city folk, but their nomadic, rough lifestyle is very well suited to Garou life. Residents of cities throughout the empire obey their dreaded Mongol masters as efficiently as they can, lest they suffer the same fate as Kiev or Ningxia. Garou in these cities are seen as weak cowards by comparison to their noble brethren on the steppe, but those Garou — ancestors of the Glass Walkers and possibly the Hakken Shadow Lords — accept their lot gladly, fighting the Wyrm where it grows and dwells within large cities. **World of Darkness: Blood and Silk** addresses some questions of running a *Werewolf* chronicle in the Far East during the Dark Ages.

Recent Times

Victorian London

For a good look at Victorian London as a city, there are few better resources than the works of Charles Dickens — even something as commonplace as *A Christmas Carol* can provide at least a rough idea of what the setting is like. In *Werewolf*, Victorian London is a smoky, coal-powered city with a wide and deep chasm between the very rich and the very poor. There is no middle class to speak of here. Victorian London is very much in the thrall of the Weaver and Wyrm; the Weaver's rigidity keeps people of various social classes from interacting with one another or moving from one class to another, while the Wyrm makes sure that far more people are oppressed and dehumanized than live in comfort and peace. This is a fine point in history to showcase the beginning of the Silver Fangs' precipitous decline.



Dodge City, Kansas

Urban chronicles in the Wild West setting may be a bit contradictory; after all, if you're in the city, you're not really in the *Wild West*, right? But Dodge City was big enough in spirit, if not in size. It was in many ways the quintessential Western town, not quite "city" but close enough. The Iron Riders established a presence in Dodge City fairly early on, and it was a place infamous for being the wildest of all Western towns. The reputation was more impressive than the reality — but that reputation had a certain power, and the Dodge City of the Umbra was bustling with wild, near-frenzied spirits. Eventually the yearly cattle drives took the lifeblood out of Dodge, but the legend of the time may be worth exploring.

World War Two Cities

The Second World War and the years surrounding it are a great time period for a *Werewolf* chronicle. Against the madness and chaos of total war, the Garou face some of their greatest trials: The Wyrm's rise to worldwide power; the emergence of nuclear weaponry and power; convulsive global conflict; a divisive struggle within the Get of Fenris and several other tribes. There's plenty going on. No city in the world was unaffected by the war, but a few were particularly hard-hit:

- **Berlin:** In the early years of the war, Berlin is the source of intense Nazi propaganda; it's something of a shining beacon of the "perfection" that the Third Reich will bring to the world. The late days of the war are dangerous, as the Allies all descend on an impoverished, desperate city. The Get of Fenris dominate the local Garou, controlling several caerns within Germany's proper borders, but the tribe is split between those who hear a clarion call to duty in "Deutschland Uber Alles" and those who believe that the Nazis are in thrall to the Wyrm.

- **Casablanca:** Bogart movies aside, Casablanca during the war is a hotbed of human activity, given its status as a neutral city. Complicating things for the Garou, Casablanca is home to the Sept of the Great Wheel, a Silent Strider caern connected to dozens of moon bridges that lead to caerns across the globe. A chronicle set in Casablanca, therefore, can have Garou characters interact with anyone from any part of the Garou end of the war, and the players' pack can travel to just about anywhere in the world in search of foes to

vanquish. This is certainly a globetrotting sort of chronicle, but against the backdrop of the war there are great stories to be had.

- **London:** In the earliest years of the war, London was like any other wartime city. Once the Blitz began, however, and Berlin began to send bombers over London, the city's feel and mood changed drastically. Garou in Blitz London won't be able to protect the city from bombers; they will find the forces of the Wyrm trying to infiltrate through the despair and destruction throughout the city. This is a time when the British are calling on one another to be brave and strong, and the Garou can help them keep a stiff upper lip by keeping the Wyrm's minions at bay.

The Cold War: Berlin

The attractive thing about Cold War Berlin as a chronicle setting is the city's division into East and West Berlin, and the West Berliners' isolation in the middle of hundreds of square miles of totalitarian communism. One of the core questions of such a chronicle is the disposition of Berlin's City Father, for surely Berlin had a single City Father before the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961. Perhaps the Wall's erection creates a magical effect, literally bisecting the City Father into two beings, one for each half of Berlin (or splits the personality of a single spirit, driving it mad). Perhaps the creation of the Wall leaves two truly separate cities behind, neither with the strength to support a City Father — the spirit might go rogue, or just be killed.

Multiply this by the fact that after the Berlin Wall goes up, only the Garou can easily traverse the barrier and travel from one side of the city to the other. A pack of Bone Gnawers or other *urrah* would be invaluable messengers and spies during the Cold War — even if the supernatural denizens of Berlin want little to do with the politics of the two Germanys and the larger empires that control them, anyone with any preexisting influence on both sides of the Wall will have need to traverse it on occasion. The existence of the Wall would eventually bring about an Umbral Wall to echo it as Berliners became resigned to the thing's loathsome existence, and the near-universal hatred of the thing would be likely to invest the Umbral Wall with Wyrm-energies. This would eventually make the Umbral Wall as difficult to traverse as the physical Wall.





Appendix: Riot Gear

Gifts

It should come as no surprise that most Gifts allowing Garou to tap the power of the city are either homid or Glass Walker in origin. Metis and lupus are at least one step removed from tapping into the spiritual undercurrent of humanity and making its powers their own, and not even the Bone Gnawers celebrate the city in the same way that the Glass Walkers do. The Gnawers survive urban life — the Glass Walkers exult in it.

That said, there's nothing about the following Gifts that requires exclusive membership in an "urrah" tribe or homid birth; anyone willing to learn these urban tricks has only to find a teacher. It may cost a few extra experience points, but as dangerous as the city streets of the World of Darkness can get, it may be well worth the price.

Homid Gifts

• Climb Like an Ape (Level One) — Garou with this Gift find that moving vertically is just as easy as moving horizontally; whether they are walking along a sidewalk, climbing stairs, or scaling the side of a building, their pace doesn't change in the slightest, nor do they tire out more rapidly. This Gift doesn't make it any easier or less dangerous to climb in precarious circumstances — a ten-story fall is still a ten-story fall, and a sheer surface remains sheer — but the Gift does make sure that the character can climb as quickly as he walks.

System: The player spends a point of Rage. For the next scene the Garou's movement rate is unchanged whether he is climbing or walking; he moves at Dexterity +5 meters per turn, period. This Gift does not decrease the difficulty for Athletics rolls used to climb, but it does allow the Garou to run, or make an Athletics roll to improve his speed, just as he could while moving across an empty plain. This Gift is taught by a monkey-spirit.

• Stench and the City (Level One) — Many city Garou use this Gift when facing off against just about anything with a particularly sensitive nose: this can include other Garou, Black Spiral Dancers, and a host of normal animals or Wyrm-creatures. The Gift incapacitates its target by overwhelming its sense of smell with the stink of the city: sweat, blood, human waste, rot, smoke and car exhaust.

Garou have been known to use this gift to pull one of their own out of the thrall of frenzy, or to incapacitate a crazed wolf without doing permanent injury. The Black Spiral Dancers are said to be quite familiar with Stench and the City as well, and are perfectly willing to use it on Garou of the other Thirteen Tribes.

System: The Garou should select a target with a sense of smell better than that of a human, spend a point of Rage, and roll Stamina + Primal-Urge (difficulty of the target's Stamina + 5, maximum of 9). For every success rolled, the target loses one die from all actions for the next turn; if five successes are rolled, the target is incapacitated for the scene. The target may resist by holding his breath, if he is aware; if he does so he must follow the rules for suffocation on p. 189 of Werewolf. This gift is taught by a skunk-spirit.

• Rooftop Sprint (Level Two) — On occasion, a city Garou may find himself in a chase across the rooftops of his town. He may be pursuing a fleeing Wyrm spirit or Black Spiral Dancer, or he might be running for his life from similar foes. Rooftop Sprint makes such a chase much more survivable — and even winnable — for the Garou who uses it. He becomes able to leap up and down several stories, and easily spring across open alleyways. The primary restriction



on the character's movement is that he cannot touch the ground, or the Gift's effect ends at once.

System: The player must spend a point of Rage and roll Dexterity + Athletics (difficulty 6). For every success achieved, the character can jump up or down one story (3 meters) or 3 meters horizontally, without danger or difficulty. Athletics rolls can improve jumping distances, just as always; the effects of those Athletics rolls just add to the result given by this Gift. The Gift's effects last for one scene, or until the character touches ground at street level — if the Garou touches pavement, grass, or anything else commonly considered "ground" he is considered to have touched ground, but if he leaps from car roof to car roof he should be okay. Rooftop Sprint is taught by an alleycat-spirit.

• **Gaia's Toolbox (Level Three)** — Garou are half wolf, and so runners after prey. But they are also half human, and thus toolmakers and tool users whose brains and hands enable them to control far more of the cosmos. This Gift enables the Garou to see how any tool or any task fits into the greater "toolmaker puzzle": the question of how humans can survive their own cleverness. A monkey-spirit teaches this gift.

System: The Garou holds a tool or thinks of a task. She need not be in Homid form, but must be able to do what the Gift requires. She breathes carefully, asking Gaia's will for the place of the tool or deed; the player rolls Intelligence + Primal-Urge. The Storyteller, based on the number of successes, will allow the Garou some insight into how the tool can be used to affect the web of life, often in ways that are not obvious. As the Garou doesn't receive the answer to any one particular question (other than "What can this object/deed accomplish in the greater scheme of things?"), this Gift is mainly useful for gaining "hints" from the Storyteller as needed.

Theurge Gifts

• **Web Walker (Level Three)** — The Garou may travel on the Pattern Web through the Umbra without physical difficulty, and without attracting the unfriendly attention of Weaver-spirits in the area. Any Weaver-spirit can teach this Gift, but it can also be learned from a spirit that has the Scale charm.

System: To activate this Gift, the player spends two Gnosis and rolls Charisma + Science (difficulty 7). Success enables the Garou to travel through the Umbra across the Pattern Web as though she were on a moon bridge. Whether the Pattern Web's strands go where the Garou wants to travel is another matter entirely.

Bone Crawler Gifts

• **Stench and the City (Level One)** — As the homid Gift.

Glass Walker Gifts

• **Weaver's Eyes (Level One)** — Garou with this Gift gain an insight into the Weaver's deep and subtle patterns for hiding information inside of other information and to the invisible patterns buried in large prime numbers. Encryption algorithms mean nothing to these Glass Walkers; using Weaver's Eyes, they can even pierce magical shrouding of data. The Garou must have the data to be decrypted nearby in some form — generally, residing on a local computer. Weaver's Eyes cannot be directly used to break open the encryption on a live connection between two computers, but it will help the Garou use his own abilities to break through that encryption.

System: The player spends one Willpower and rolls Perception + Computer (difficulty of 10 - the local Gauntlet). The number of successes necessary depends on the encryption used on the message or connection that the character is trying to pierce. Encryption created by ordinary mortal programmers requires one success to pierce; mundane encryption created by the top echelon of mortal programmers requires two successes to pierce. Magical encryption, such as that created by the Gift: Encrypt or similar magical abilities performed by non-Garou, requires three or more successes — generally speaking, the character must achieve more successes on the Weaver's Eyes roll than his opposite number got on an Encrypt roll.

If the character comes across an encrypted connection between two other computers, Weaver's Eyes can help him break the connection in a hurry, but since the data traffic is far from him, the Gift cannot pierce the encryption directly. However, it will provide one extra success on the Perception + Computer roll used to break the encryption, and it will allow the character to attempt to break through magical encryption. This Gift is taught by a Raccoon-spirit.

• **Encrypt (Level Two)** — Paranoid Glass Walkers — which is to say, most of them — use the best encryption technologies available on the open market when they send data through the Internet or Digital Web. If a Glass Walker suspects that a Netspider is watching her Net activity, she may even choose to use this Gift, which magically protects data against snooping. Encrypt doesn't ordinarily hide itself from magical observers — anyone with the ability to see into the spirit world will notice that the message has been enshrouded, unless the Glass Walker takes special care to hide that.

System: The player must spend one Willpower and roll Manipulation + Computers; the difficulty is (10 - the local Gauntlet). Success means that the character's message has been encrypted beyond the ability of most mortals to pierce. This encryption can

apply either to a single message (one email or burst of data) or to a connection (such as might exist between two computers for a long download or chat-conversation). A character trying to break the encryption on a single message gets just one chance to do so — the magic surrounding the message deletes it if the character fails. A character trying to break the encryption on a connection can treat the attempt as an extended test.

With just one success, the encryption can be pierced by mortal means — a human who is not magically active can break through the encryption with a Perception + Computers roll (difficulty of the Garou's Willpower) that achieves five or more successes. With more than one success, the encryption can only be pierced by a Garou using the Gift Weaver's Eyes (see above) or similar magical abilities. If the Garou additionally spends one Gnosis, the message does not appear to be encrypted — it seems to be an innocuous conversation, or an income-tax spreadsheet, or the like. This Gift is taught by a squirrel-spirit.

• **Overclock (Level Two)** — In the world of computers, your equipment is outdated by the time it's out of the box. This gift allows the Garou to make a piece of computer equipment perform beyond its specifications. This includes speeding up a processor to render a 3D image quicker, improving video cards to display more polygons than usual or adding more memory to hold larger amounts of information. Any technological spirit can teach this gift.

System: The player rolls Manipulation + Computer (difficulty 6). More successes mean more improvement. However, the Storyteller may decide that a certain number of successes are necessary to attain a certain speed. (Speeding up your 233mhz Pentium to run the latest game may only need one success, but trying to overclock your old Amiga to render modern game graphics in less than a day may need at least three). The effect of this gift lasts one scene or function (in the cases of extended renders and processes).

• **Web Walker (Level Three)** — As the Theurge Gift, save that the Gnosis expenditure is reduced to one point for Glass Walkers. Non-Glass Walkers who learn this Gift as a Glass Walker Gift must still pay the standard two Gnosis cost, as per the Theurge Gift.

• **Call the City's Wolves (Level Four)** — The city is a rich and complex ecosystem, and humans, animals and machines fill the roles that natural creatures fill in the wilderness. The Glass Walkers cannot often get wild wolves to aid them, but the city has its own predators. With this Gift, the Glass Walker can make a phone call, send an email or fax and expect some sort of backup; some master Theurges simply knock on the nearest door and wait to see who emerges. A City Father or Mother teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends a Rage point and rolls Wits + Leadership. The number of successes equals the number of city predators who will emerge: the figures who control and cull the human herd. These may be gang kids, members of citizen vigilante groups, vicious cops, or even wild, diseased dogs. The spiritually summoned backup arrives a scene later, although the Garou can convert extra successes to speed the arrival of assistance rather than adding to the numbers. (One success spent in this fashion brings the help in ten turns; two successes halve the wait to five turns, while three brings backup on the next turn.) The "wolves" will be disposed to cooperate with the Glass Walkers, but won't blindly charge into battle for him. The effects last for one scene.

• **Song of the City-Beast (Level Five)** — The lupus of many tribes know the Songs of the Great Beast, which can summon semi-legendary monsters such as giant sharks, apemen and dinosaurs. While skunk-apes, Jersey Devils and mothmen are not common in cities, the knowledgeable Glass Walker can call forces of equal power with this Gift.

System: The player spends two Gnosis points and rolls Charisma + Streetwise, difficulty 8. A City-Beast is less of an actual mythological entity and more of an event — rampaging construction machinery, a collapsing building, a plague of hell-rats, even an incredibly aggressive St. James' Day Parade or a block party gone riot. The Beast will stay long enough to assist in immobilizing or defeating Gaia's enemies. Its nature depends on the story but it is likely to be very powerful.

Rites

Rite of Accord

Clear the Miasma

Level Four

Modern cities are choked with smog, brownish crud filling the air and suffocating the city's plant and animal life. Drive down any city highway and look closely at the trees that flank it: leaves and branches that face the roadway are brown and stunted. The emissions from heavy industry, automobiles, and power generation facilities combine to create this muck.

Garou can use this ritual to temporarily cleanse the skies of the city around them. The most obvious benefit of this is that the sky becomes clearer, the air sweeter smelling. Plants grow more than usual; human residents with respiratory difficulty find that their day is easier. Performing this ritual also improves the attitude of Gaian spirits in the city and gently weakens the wall between the Realm and the Umbra. The ritual's effects only last for a day; with the morning dew, the city's poison will return.

System: The Garou must enact this rite at a site within about a quarter-mile of the city's geographic center. The rite begins an hour before dawn; the character beseeches spirits of the sky, rain, and sun to cleanse the filth from the sky. At the culmination of the hour-long rite, the character spends one Gnosis and rolls Manipulation + Occult (difficulty of the local Gauntlet, which means that a careful spirit survey of the geographical center of the city may be worthwhile before performing Clear the Miasma).

If the Garou achieves three or more successes, the smog in the sky precipitates as ordinary dirt into the morning dew. The local Gauntlet drops by 1 for the day, and the general attitude of nature-spirits in the city improves as they don't need to spend their time fighting pollution and Wyrm taint. This last effect reduces the difficulty of all Social rolls dealing with local Gaian spirits by 1 for the next day.

Mystic Rites *Appease the Traffic Gods*

Level One

Glass Walkers and Bone Gnawers know that it's nearly impossible to get across town in a hurry, especially

around the morning and evening rush hour—and in very large cities, those morning and evening rush hours edge closer together every week. Garou can do it in their lupine and near-lupine forms, but most of the time traveling across town as a gigantic wolf isn't a reasonable thing to do.

This ritual allows a Garou to get the attention of the pattern spiders that nurse the ebb and flow of traffic patterns across a city's streets and highways. The rite asks them to nudge things here and there to provide the clearest possible path for the Garou's vehicle. Lights turn green just as the character hits them, or stay green just long enough for the character to sneak through—or, failing that, nearby cops are distracted as the Garou runs the red. Note that *Appease the Traffic Gods* can't perform miracles: if there's an accident at one of the main intersections in town, the best this rite can do is free up an alternate side route.

The "traffic gods" may well simply manifest in the form of a convenient ambulance or fire engine for the characters' vehicle to slipstream through traffic, but Garou should be aware that this rite won't protect them if they violate the simple and obvious rules of the road. *Appease the Traffic Gods* will never, for instance, lure a character's vehicle to drive on the sidewalk.



System: The ritemaster must take a small toy car that looks roughly similar to her vehicle, and roll it across that vehicle's dashboard while murmuring a quiet invocation to the spirits. The player rolls Charisma + Rituals; hazards and traffic that might interfere with the car's ability to get across town as quickly as possible are reduced if she succeeds. If the Storyteller would prefer to just describe the trip, this can be a general reduction in difficulty (and increase in speed) proportional to the number of successes earned. Barring that, the rite reduces difficulty to move around in traffic by 1 per success (to a minimum of 2). Note that this rite won't help the Garou perform wacky stunts like going up on two wheels or jumping the car into the air: it only helps to move quickly through city streets.

Rite of Feeding the Wolf

Level One

The Glass Walkers may be masters of adapting to the urban environment, but it has come at some cost. The wolf blood in them has grown thin, and it has become perilously easy to lose the wolf or fall into Harano out of simple neglect for their wilder side. Some Glass Walkers use this rite as a means of reconnecting with their more primal self. Sadly enough, the rite is not of Glass Walker origin; it was pioneered by another tribe (some say the Red Talons) as a means of reinforcing their identity in the hostile urban environment. The rite was allegedly shared with the Glass Walkers as an act of friendship, which casts some doubt on the idea that it was a Talon creation.

System: The Garou must go to a wild place, even if it's a vacant lot overgrown with mimosa or ailanthus trees, and act in a feral, animalistic fashion for long enough to become sweaty and filthy. He may be in any form while doing this. The player rolls Primal-Urges + Expression, difficulty 6 in a wild place with animals and plants, 8 in a wild place without animals larger than rats, and 9 in a tame place such as a nicely kept lawn. The player may add one to his Rage for each success on the roll, for the remainder of the scene. The Storyteller may wish to award a bonus success to players who get sufficiently into the spirit of the rite to roleplay it with great fervor.

Read All About It

Level Two

When the Glass Walkers and their urrah brethren need to spread the word about something important to all Garou in the city, but don't want to draw direct attention to themselves as they might with a howl, they might use the rite Read All About It. This rite is most appropriate when the message that needs to be disseminated is important but not urgent — "Be aware

that the Chief of Police is in league with a Wyrm-cult" might work, while "We're under attack by Black Spiral Dancers" is not a good choice for this rite.

The Garou picks out a message of 100 words or fewer and uses Read All About It to insert that message into a local newspaper, concealing it such that only Garou can read it. The message might be placed anywhere in the paper that a short blurb might appear — the sidebar along the front page, short local news items, or the classified ads. Anyone subject to the Delirium simply will not see the message, instead glossing over it as an uninteresting news item. Garou can easily identify such messages as being special, however, and their eyes are drawn to them, making it quite likely that any werewolf who reads the paper will realize that it contains a special message for Garou only.

Unfortunately, the Glass Walker who developed this rite didn't consider that Black Spiral Dancers, being Garou, could also see the messages; however, other creatures in the thrall of the Wyrm cannot see it. It is rumored that the Glass Walkers have developed a similar ritual for use over the Internet, concealing important information in otherwise nonsensical spam email, Usenet, or message-board posts.

System: To perform the rite, the ritemaster must write the message out by hand, in block printing, on newsprint. He uses a ball of toy putty to pull the message text off of the paper, and imprint it onto the most recent edition of the newspaper that he wishes to send the message through. He must spend one Willpower and achieve at least one success in a Willpower roll. Since the concealment of this message depends in part on the Delirium, Kinfolk who succeed at a Perception + Occult roll (difficulty 8) can also read it. (Creatures immune to the Delirium who are not Kin-folk, such as mages or vampires, cannot read the message; even undead who were Kin in life are unable to detect the hidden communication.)

The message will appear in the next edition of the paper; its placement depends on the number of successes rolled. One success places the message deep in the classified ads, two in an interior section, three on the front page of an interior section, four successes puts the message on the front page but under the fold, and five successes puts the message on the front page, above the fold. A botch on this roll puts the message in the paper in such a manner that it is visible to everyone who reads it, not just Garou.

Rite of the Ziggurat

Level Two

The Glass Walkers and Children of Gaia learned long ago that just as nature combines functions in a forest, Garou can "stack" rites atop one another for

more powerful magic. Originally, urban septs performed rites atop ziggurats, in cathedral towers, or even on top of pyramids, but the skyscraper caerns of Glass Walkers make this much easier now than it was earlier. The City Farmers even take advantage of the principle to grow trees and vines up through lightwells, creating open, Gaian spaces within the huge buildings.

The Rite of the Ziggurat unites and strengthens other rites. It is useful when two or more rites (even minor rites) are being performed atop one another in a multilevel structure. The use of intercoms, cell phones, and even closed-circuit TV and webcams makes this much easier. For example, a group of Garou Greeting the Moon could synchronize their actions with another pack consecrating a fetish two floors above and a Rite of Renown one floor up.

System: The ritemaster rolls Wits + Rituals as usual. The Storyteller counts the number of rites being performed and may allow the total number of rites as a number of extra dice for the dice pool of the topmost rite. In addition, the background count of spirits may rise in relation to all the rites, with potentially interesting effects.

Rite of Tying the Snare

Level Two

Snare-spirits are subtle and persistent entities of the City's Umbrascape, trapping humans, other spirits and Banes in the city. This rite invokes their power to bind a specific enemy to a particular location, even if only for a while. Calling on these Weaver-spirits is a potentially dangerous endeavor; if the rite is performed improperly, the snare-spirits will likely try to bind the ritemaster into the Pattern Web. But success can leave an enemy right where the ritemaster wants him; several vampires have gone up in four-alarm building fires thanks to this rite.

Using this rite, a ritemaster must first walk, run, or otherwise move round the area to be bound. She must name that which she wishes to bind, and the name must be sufficiently accurate — the vampire who works in this building” is not precise enough, whereas “the vampire who works in this building under the alias of Mr. Vincenzo” will suffice. She then invokes the trapping spirit, and “ties a knot” round the area. If the rite is successful, the target of the rite will find it difficult to leave the area — barricades are harder to shift, doors lock themselves, and so on.

System: The ritemaster rolls Wits + Rituals as usual. Each success on the rite locks one door, jams one elevator or otherwise seals one particular avenue of escape for the target. In addition, the difficulty of any rolls or feats of strength made to leave the area (such as Athletics check to jump from roof to roof) is increased by 1 for each of the ritemaster’s successes, to a maximum

difficulty of 10. This rite is at its most potent when combined with more mundane means of blocking exits, such as barricading doors and cutting phone lines.

Note that this rite cannot restrict any other activities of the target that aren’t directly related to leaving, nor can it prevent other people from assisting the trapped target; a phone call for help will not be affected, and neither will the firemen arriving to break down the doors.

Rite of the 13th Floor

Level Four

The Garou keep many secrets, something that becomes tricky in the enclosed and overpopulated realm of the city. This rite draws upon the power of local superstition, allowing either the 13th floor of a tall building or room #1 in a hotel to go unnoticed. The performance of the rite involves placing unlucky symbols such as pictures of black cats or the number “13” by the entrance of the place to be hidden. Some ritemasters trying to conceal a hotel room perform a fake ritual murder in the bathroom; those with a captive loyal to the Wyrm may go the extra distance to make the ritual real.

System: The resulting successes from the performance of the rite represent the number of successes needed on a Willpower check (difficulty 6) for any observer to actually see the button or entrance to the hidden region. If an actual captive is sacrificed in a genuine murder, the difficulty for the Willpower check rises to 9. This rite affects the perceptions of anyone, supernatural or mortal, who isn’t present at the ritual. The effects last for one day per success.

Rite of the Reefweaver

Level Four

The shark-lords are said to have taught this rite to some very brave or very foolish Garou long past, in return for a favor involving a sky-stone (a meteorite). It organizes all the spirits in a given region into ecological harmony: Weaver, Wyld, and even some Wyrm beings can enter into a state of coexistence like the numerous entities of a coral reef. The peace produced by this powerful rite is that of Gaia, not the Weaver. Conflict and death will not cease, but the overall functioning of the system will be balanced and harmonious; humans, Garou, animals and spirits will all know this on some level.

The ritemaster calls out, draws, paints, or otherwise creates a representation of the interconnectedness of all life, spiritual and physical, in the region where he works. He may roleplay this according to the Storyteller’s will. Wyrm entities must be prevented from subverting the process and balanced with spirits of the Weaver and Wyld.

System: The ritemaster must sacrifice a permanent point of Gnosis and make the roll as usual. The result is a state of balance and a stable “food web” of humans, animals and spirits, enduring for as many full moons as the ritemaster has successes. For example, a battle-spirit which had been inspiring gang attacks might instead draw potential gang members to violent sports which build brotherhood and community, or a lust-spirit which had made men visit prostitutes might be induced to make their wives and partners more sexually attractive. The rite can be renewed as often as desired, although the price is dear.

Rite of the Wyld Machines

Level Four

All urban Garou know that machines have spirits, and the potential to awaken. But buried deep, deep within the machine’s Weaver-self is the Wyld seed from which it grew. Every bulldozer was factory-made from iron ore; each vibra-lounger comes from wood and fiber of Gaia. This more specialized version of the Rite of Spirit Awakening awakens the Wyld within any machine, stirring it to behave in ways no ordinary machine-spirit would dream of.

System: The Garou must howl and dance wildly to awaken the spirit, rolling Expression + Rituals. In some cases, such as a crazy pagan’s motorcycle or a lathe used by generations of blacksmith Kin, the machine is already a little bit wild, and the difficulty will be 6. For machines used by unthinking humans, it’s 8, and for machines of the Wyrm (such as a Black Spiral’s torture chair) it is 10.

With one success, the machine will work normally but will aid the Garou. This might include an enemy’s car agreeing to stop (although it’s hard to perform this rite for the requisite ten minutes during a car chase). Three successes cause the machine to act abnormally: radios might bring oracular messages or the voices of ancestors, and vending machines turn out to have surprising contents such as boiled skulls, useful business cards or taser refills. Five successes mean that the machine will acquire mobility and a touch of wit. The Garou who scores seven successes can ask the machine to follow her into any danger (it can also speak), and further successes lead to machines shapeshifting, stepping sideways and so on. This rite can lead to stories so bizarre that elders refuse to award Glory for them.

The Ending Game

Level Five

All Garou worry about the Apocalypse, even the Glass Walkers. But the form that the Apocalypse will take isn’t clear to anyone. This Gift allows the Garou

to see the form and nearness of the Apocalypse, as well as how it will affect her and her pack.

System: The ritemaster and her pack must play a game together. It might be a party game on a Playstation, a board game such as Monopoly or Parcheesi, or an arcade machine. The Bone Gnawers set great store by the divinatory powers of Ms. Pac-Man, while Glass Walkers revere complicated flight simulators and multiplayer first-person shooters. The ritemaster then rolls Gnosis, difficulty 6 for a simple question, 8 for a complex question. The results of the game provide some hint as to the nature of the next battle the pack must face, and how their victory might tie into the greater tapestry of the Apocalypse War. The more successes, the more detailed the information becomes, although the presentation will always remain somewhat cryptic. (“Okay, now all the ghosts have turned into Blinky, and they’re chasing down a bunch of grapes. That’s got to mean something.”)

Minor Rites

Appease the Prey-Spirit

This is a version of the Prayer for the Prey that acknowledges that not all Garou live by hunting and killing animals. Bone Gnawers most often perform the rite, but many Glass Walkers perform it also. While wilderness Garou laugh at the thought of “praying to a soda machine,” the Gnawers know that finding food in the urban jungle isn’t always easy.

The Garou thanks the spirit that has fed him. This may be a plant-spirit, a machine-spirit (if the food was machine-made) or the Bone Gnawer’s favorite spirit, the Garbage Heap.

System: The Garou gives thanks when eating, and then steps sideways to thank the spirit “in person.” If he does so each time he obtains a meal this way (snacks do not mandate this rite), his difficulty for dealing with such spirits will drop by one.

Greet the Lady of Justice

This rite thanks and praises the spirit of Justice, often neglected by both humans and Garou, but a powerful ally. In some cities, this is embodied in a sacred place or caern, or Justice can be found inhabiting a civil rights memorial or the site of a strike. The Garou must offer praises (in song, in prayer, in dance, etc) to Justice whenever she feels the presence of “the Lady.”

System: The Garou must act out her thanks. If she does so faithfully, she gets 1 extra die to all Mental rolls when seeking true justice. The effects last for one week.

Fetishes

Gaia's Phone Book

Level One, Gnosis 1

Garou and Kin alike can use this bizarre fetish, which appears to be a gigantic phone book with pages missing, numbers crossed out and illegibly overwritten, lots of greasy curry, pizza and beer stains, lengthy sections of different-colored pages and hundreds of sticky notes attached with incorrect and misleading information. It is as poorly organized and indexed as human phone books. A termite-spirit animates this huge and messy fetish. The phone book contains not only the phone numbers of Garou and Kin (especially Glass Walkers, Children of Gaia and Silver Fangs), but numbers for spirits, sites in the Umbra or even some caerns. Note that copies of this phone book are all different, and that Garou and Kin guard them carefully. This can be used with SpiComs (see **Tribebook: Glass Walkers**) as well as any phone. To use this phone book requires a Wits + Enigmas roll, difficulty the Willpower of the person or entity that one wishes to call.

Leadfoot License Plate

Level One, Gnosis 6

This fetish is made by binding a spirit known for trickery or camouflage, such as a coyote-spirit or a plastic elemental, into a highly polished sheet of metal about the right size for a license plate. When activated, the plate appears to be an appropriately lettered and numbered plate for the state the vehicle is in. (It will occasionally manifest as an allegedly witty vanity plate like "2FAST4U".) Any observer who wishes to take note of the speed of the vehicle, or to train a speed-measuring device on it, must make a contested Willpower roll against the Gnosis of the fetish. If the vehicle is pulled over despite the protection, the fetish provides the driver with 3 dice of Subterfuge for the purposes of talking her way out of the ticket, as long as her hands are on the wheel. Finally, any automated speed-tracking device that snaps a picture of the plate will only get an unreadable smudge.

Moon-Watch (Sun-Watch)

Level One, Gnosis 5

This Kinfolk-made watch contains a Lune, and has a dial showing the moon's phases in addition to the correct time. Wherever the Garou is at the time, he can look at the watch and react as if he were seeing the actual moon in the sky. This works indoors, underground and even in far Umbral realms, although the Garou may still gain Rage only for his first sighting of the moon on any given night, be it with this fetish or by viewing the actual moon.

The Dragon Breed are said to wear watches carrying the image of the Sun, which they worship as a great God. The truth of this is not known. If extant, these would be similar to Moon-Watches, likely with minor Sun-spirits bound within.

Veil of Sin

Level Two, Gnosis 5

As human spirituality wanes further and further, Veils of Sin become rarer and rarer. This fetish commonly takes the form of a scarf, bandana, hijab (Muslim head covering) or 1950s ladies' hat with veil. It is always worn so as to cover the head or face. The spirit disguises not the wearer, but their deeds. When about to commit some breach of a specific religious code of conduct, the wearer may roll to activate the fetish. Success indicates that any genuinely religious person will not notice the sin. The wearer is not invisible — it's simply that no one will think that he is doing anything wrong. Any onlooker may resist the effects of the veil with Willpower, but they must have some sort of reason to suspect that something isn't quite right.

Note when activated to conceal something that is a sin to one religion but not to another, the veil can only conceal the former. As a result, this fetish is at its most useful when used to obscure deeds that are accepted as sins to most religions, such as theft. The growing tide of faithlessness or religious hypocrisy in most modern cities has further undercut the veil's utility, and they are harder to find.

A spirit in allegiance to one of the Weaver Incarnae tied to religion (such as the Patriarch or Dogma) must be bound inside this fetish.

Telegraph Klaive

Level Three, Gnosis 5

The Iron Riders were the first to learn that the web of connections that permeated the modern city had its own spirits, and that they enabled Garou to fight more effectively as Gaia's warriors. They were the first to create this unusual fetish, and although the means of communication have changed, the name remains. This fetish takes the symbolic form of a klaive, but is not a true weapon for use in physical combat; some are klaive-shaped necklace pendants, some are keychains, and a few Random Interrupts have encoded their telegraph klawies as software. The weapon contains a war-spirit just as does a regular klaive, but the spirit is not always willing to enter this unusual weapon (or rather, interpretation of the "weapon" concept).

The telegraph klaive can be used to attack through the city's web: the Garou must know his target's exact location, state the means of connection (such as phone, Internet, or the sewer) and then make the roll as if he

were throwing the klawie. The web of plumbing, power outlets, etc., will instantaneously carry the attack to the enemy. Bone Gnawers have savaged Black Spirals by attacking through sewer pipes, while attacks over the phone have made the reputation of many Glass Walkers. The enemy will usually be surprised (to say the least) by this attack, but may defend and soak as usual. The telegraph klawie can be reused, but it must first be physically retrieved (even if software, it must be downloaded from the enemy's computer firsthand). Most Garou with these fetishes are careful about how they use them, lest the enemy survive to use their own trick against them at an equally inopportune time.

Umbraphone/Umrapager

Level Three, Gnosis 5

The Umbra can be accessed in many ways. The Umbraphone, first devised by a wily Uktena of the Waterfall of Angels caern, allows speech through the Shadow. A mynah-bird spirit must bind itself to this fetish, which appears to be an ordinary cell phone. But when the Garou dials certain numbers and spends a Gnosis point, he can call spirits (who don't manifest, merely talk to him) or other Garou, regardless of their location, who are near a phone. Note that spirits and Garou will not automatically answer the phone or agree to help the caller. (The Storyteller may torment the player endlessly with spirits who are in meetings, with clients, unavailable, or out of the office). This fetish is useless without knowledge of the proper numbers, of course, and Garou who use it are wary of eavesdroppers on the cell network. Using the phone requires a Gnosis roll: some rare few Kin can use it, but most cannot. A mistake connects the user to some irritating or useless person who will never get off the phone. A botch connects the caller to a Wyrm-creature, who may well crawl out of the earpiece and eat the caller's brain. This phone can be used for the Glass Walker Gift: Phone Travel. In fact, it is the most useful fetish for those who also have this Gift.

An Umrapager can relay messages and pages from spirits, but cannot call them back. These pagers are slightly more common than Umbraphones.

The Infinite Appliance

Level Four, Gnosis 7

The Glass Walkers value and delight in science, and especially technology. Their apartments bristle with the latest gadgets. A Glass Walker Theurge and artist, Diane Stone, created this fetish using a termite-spirit, and has used it many times. In form, it is a nondescript plastic and metal box, about the size of an iMac. It has a switch on its top and an electrical cord. Its function isn't immediately obvious.

The Garou simply plug the appliance in and turn it on, spending a point of Gnosis to fuel its fetish nature. The Appliance then begins to shapeshift subtly while no one is looking. It becomes the household appliance or machine tool that is most useful to the Garou at that particular moment: a drill press, enamel kiln, gas chromatograph, or even a television set tuned to Umbral stations. It cannot become a weapon, clothing, or anything alive. The Storyteller should try to figure out what strange device would make the story more interesting. The user cannot predict or control what the appliance will turn into. It will function for one scene before reverting to its original form.

Glass Shank

Level Five, Gnosis 6

This fetish knife is crafted with the aid of a recycling-spirit from a pane of glass that was broken by a person falling through it who later died from the injuries. As one would expect, this doesn't happen often (barring active defenestration by enterprising Theurges), so these knives are relatively rare. The bloody glass is formed into a viciously sharp, short stabbing knife with a cross-shaped, four-edged blade. It is difficult to hit an opponent with this blade. It cannot be used to slash, and it has very little reach, so it is usually used in a stealthy attack. The wounds caused by the shank are wide and bleed freely. The blade when first made has a few streaks of red blood within the glass; with each use more streaks are added until the shank appears permanently the color of fresh blood. Although it is made of glass it is not remarkably fragile. It can be broken with some effort, but it will never break when used in an attack by the hand of its owner — unless she uses it against a truly solid object or foe. A spirit of blood or glass can be used to empower the fetish. Attacking with a glass shank incurs a +2 difficulty to hit due to its limited reach and angle of attack, but deals Strength +3 aggravated damage.

Talens

The following items are one-shot fetishes largely peculiar to urban septs. As usual, a character may purchase talens at character creation at the cost of two per point invested in the Fetish Background.

Attire of Desire

Gnosis 3

Any werewolf may use this talen, but few save Glass Walkers and Children of Gaia do so; most Garou are a bit prouder than that. This talen enables the stylish werewolf to dress for success when attracting a mate. A mink-spirit animates this talen, which takes the form of some sort of clothing. The clothes are

usually flattering, anything from a silk dress to rave attire, but some Bone Gnawers are reputed to fashion these talens out of hideous polyester suits. The werewolf dons the clothes (and activates the talen) before going a-courtin'.

The talen grants two effective points to Charisma, Manipulation or Appearance as desired (but not above 5) for the rest of the night; the clothes are invariably ripped to shreds if the courtship is successful. At the Storyteller's discretion, this talen may add an additional 1% to the chances of breeding true. Glass Walkers have tried to create a similar talen cosmetic treatment for the lupus of their tribe, but all results end in failure; to date, the Walkers are unable to do more than let nature take its course.

Clay Contract

Gnosis 6

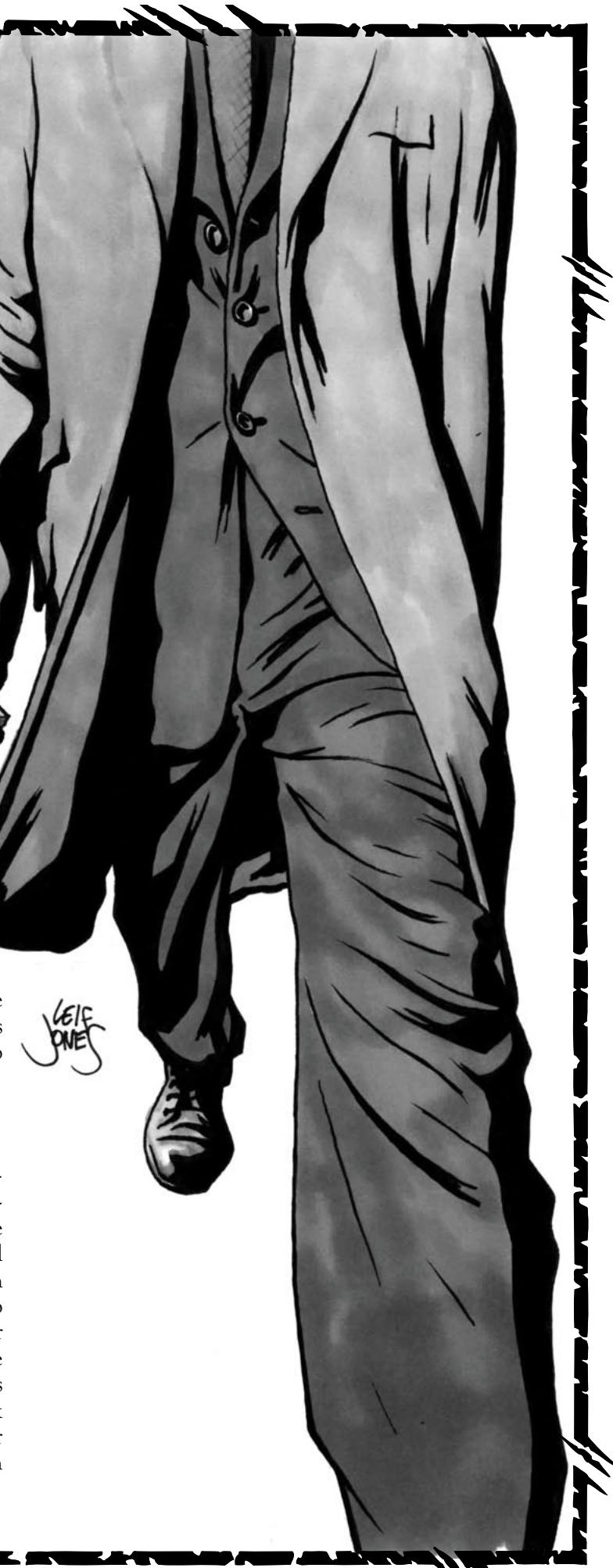
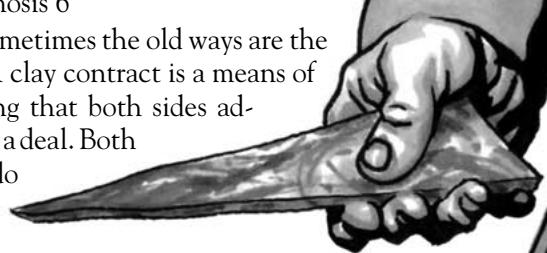
Sometimes the old ways are the best. A clay contract is a means of ensuring that both sides adhere to a deal. Both sides do a n y n o r -

mal, mundane paperwork appropriate. The paperwork is often mixed with clay figurines representing items traded (though the modern economy can make such representations difficult); some Garou substitute the blood or spit of both sides instead. The figurines are then baked into a clay pot which has a legal-spirit bound to it. If the deal itself is broken, the clay contract shatters, freeing the spirit. The spirit will then seek to punish whoever is responsible for breaking the contract — the one who reneged on the agreement.

Letter from Hell

Gnosis 6

This talen consists of a chain letter or fax, although there are rumors of an electronic version created by binding a spirit into an email. It can cross the players' path at any time during the story; its original author is never certain. The letter tells of some hellish catastrophe, soon past or about to strike, and tries to frighten or bribe the recipient into passing the letter along. It promises enormous rewards for spreading the letter (which are actually Wyrm-tainted evils such as "platinum" credit cards which allow Pentex to track anyone who uses one) and ghastly consequences for ignoring it (all too real). The reader must resist with



Willpower to avoid passing the evil tale along to as many people as possible. If she fails, she will pass it along, and if she botches, she will inadvertently add even worse warnings to this animated urban legend. The Storyteller should determine how many people (humans, Kin and Garou) have to believe in the horrific tale for it to come true in reality. Once the number is reached, the final recipient will become whatever the tale dictates: cannibal Kinfolk babysitter, cub-slasher with hooks for hands, kidney-stealing seductress, AIDS-infected orgy host, etc, etc. The villain may even be one of the player characters... The story potential of this talen is obvious.

A Psychomachiae Gaffling inhabits this talen.

Untraceable Bullets

Gnosis 6

Untraceable bullets have a metal elemental bound to them, to protect the bullet during its journey through the barrel of the gun. This makes it impossible to prove that the bullet was fired from a specific gun, using the usual law enforcement technique of comparing scratches and grooves caused by imperfections in the gun barrel. If it weren't for the impact at the end of the bullet's flight, it would appear to be unused. Metal elementals are often bound unwillingly into these talens, since the bullets are plain and unremarkable — any unique qualities would defeat the purpose. Given the usual rate of fire of a city werewolf's gun, however, the spirits are rarely imprisoned for long. Lastly, the protection of the metal elemental does not keep the bullet from being marked by fingerprints or chemical contamination.

Talen & Fetish Combo Tick Trace Talen and Fetish Radio

Radio: Level 2, Gnosis 6

Talens: Gnosis 5

This fetish and talens are used in tandem to track creatures of the material and spirit worlds. The radio is created first by coaxing the spirit of a hunting arachnid — spider or scorpion — into a working radio. The radio is usually decorated in some manner to make it a more appealing spirit home. The physical tracer, for which a tick-spirit is bound to a small piece of circuitry with protruding wires or prongs; when activated, it can crawl a short distance to the target and attach itself as unnoticeably as a tick. Wherever the target goes, even if it reaches into the Umbra, the tracer broadcasts its location to the fetish radio. The talen can broadcast for as many hours as the bound tick-spirit has Gnosis (usually 5, but stronger spirits can be bound to increase the broadcast time) before exhausting itself and becoming inert. The Garou bonded to the fetish radio must create the talens to

ensure the items work properly together. The radio may track multiple talens at the same time.

Totems

Totems of Respect

Sodals

Background Cost: 7

The Sodal spirits were the patrons of old Anglo-Saxon frankpledges, of brotherhoods of Spartan warriors, and of innumerable Garou packs who used these spirits of unity to bind their packs and septs together. A Sodal will unify any group as tightly as heart could wish; so strong are they that the Wyrm has sought to corrupt them, and has seduced a few of these kinship-spirits into becoming the horrifying Serpent Fathers (described in Freak Legion). Sodals also favor the rare Kin who run in packs with their Garou families, maintaining that these humans are simply being one with their families. They are fond of any pack that accepts Kin. Offerings of wild fungi or greenhouse flowers win their favor. The Sodals are most pleased with those packs that demonstrate perfect unity of action during their Rite of the Totem. They appear as idealized warriors appropriate to the setting; a Sodal assisting a Glass Walker pack in Rome might appear as a perfect centurion in gleaming gold armor, while a New York Sodal might appear in the guise of a heroic-seeming street gang leader.

Traits: The Sodals grant an exceptional measure of teamwork. They offer a dice pool of five teamwork dice that can be used for any Ability possessed by a fellow pack member. Hence, if only one person in a pack possesses the Occult Knowledge, his packmates can draw on the pool to make Occult rolls (although he cannot, as none of his packmates are contributing to his own knowledge). A player cannot use more dice from the community pool than a packmate has dots in the given Ability; if the highest Brawl in the pack is four dice, no packmate can use all five teamwork dice on a Brawl roll. In addition, a Sodal grants three extra dice to avoid frenzy as long as the pack sticks together and doesn't quarrel.

Ban: Any sowers of discord will find themselves and their pack abandoned by the Sodals. This applies to any Garou or Kin who starts or abets fighting, discord and arguments. Legitimate differences of opinion are unavoidable, but deliberate malice will drive off the Sodals.

Totems of War Momentum

Background Cost: 7

Momentum is a victory-spirit of many names, including "Hot Hands" or "Winning Streak." She favors the brave and the crazy, giving and withdrawing

success almost randomly. Bone Gnawers endlessly seek her favor, but few of them enjoy it for long. The Shadow Lords are much more elaborate and careful in the rites they practice for her, but have no more luck than the ragged children of Rat do. Momentum has no true set form, but most werewolves report meeting her in the guise of a lovely but capricious woman, often dressed as if attending a high-stakes casino.

The victory that Momentum brings can be the center of many stories: the Storyteller may make her the patron of a mighty pack who suddenly fell into ruin, or tell the tale of hapless cliath raised to great Renown by her mysterious forces. She is a temporary totem at best, and is mainly chosen by packs that intend to stay together for a single mission, then separate.

Traits: Momentum grants a dice pool that can be applied by the pack to *any* dice roll they require (although they must share out the dice as usual). This dice pool starts at zero dice, and increases by one die for every victory the pack shares over a potent foe (such as a group of well-armed fomori at least equal in number to the pack).

Ban: No matter what, Momentum will *always* abandon the pack at a random point, most often a highly inopportune time. This causes no Renown loss (it's expected), but is inevitably bad timing from the pack's perspective. The Storyteller picks the time at which Momentum leaves the pack, but it must be at some point before the close of the chronicle (or even the story) — the pack should go through at least one climactic struggle without her assistance. The points spent on Totem can be applied to the characters' next pack totem without penalty.

Totems of Wisdom

City Father/Mother

Background cost: 6

A City Father or Mother is the manifestation of the human and machine interactions within the tight confines of the city limits. It reflects the character and history of the community that spawned it, but it is capable of acting on its own initiative in the city's best interests.

The totem will only spring into being where there is a city, with a minimum population of 50,000 people. It cannot leave its bounded area except to travel into the Near Umbra, where it is restricted to urban realms. The totem appears in an anthropomorphic form that represents its city. The City Father of Pittsburgh manifests an immigrant steelworker, while San Diego's takes the form of a Spanish missionary.

Traits: All children of a City Father may interact with the spirits of their City as if they had the Bone Gnawer Gift: Attunement, without the expenditure of Gnosis. Additionally, the totem may inform them of

impending danger, either personally or through an appropriate messenger. Children of the City also each receive three additional dice to any Streetwise tests relevant to their city. Glass Walkers gain one temporary Wisdom when accepted by a City Father, but members of all other tribes lose one temporary Honor.

Ban: City Fathers or Mothers will often ask their Children to perform tasks for the good of the city. If these tasks are refused, the totem will withdraw its support.

Invisible Hand

Background Cost: 4

The Invisible Hand is a powerful market-spirit, strong in the ancient Greek city-states, the Venetian Republic, the Hanseatic League, and in early America. He is a favorite of the Glass Walkers and of some Children of Gaia. Some Garou interpret him as a spirit of pure capitalism. Others see him as a spirit of exchange which leaders regulate for the benefit of the common people, and still others hold that he is the patron of Gaian 18th century physiocracy: the economic idea that wealth can be created only by husbanding the Earth. In any case, the Hand insists that his children deal fairly with all, while allowing themselves fair profit.

Traits: Followers of the Hand are acute business-wolves, whether haggling over a steaming elk carcass or acquiring a bankrupt company. They will always find it easy to learn the Law of the Jungle or human law; each pack member gains two dice of the Law Knowledge. In addition, the pack gains three extra dice on any dice pool made to strike a "deal" of any sort, whether merchant negotiations, peace talks, or even some instances of gamecraft.

Ban: The Hand will disown any child who cheats or reneges on a bargain.

Totem of Cunning

Tammany Hall

Background Cost: 5

For all those desiring power in the political arena, there is no greater totem than Tammany Hall. However, an alliance with this entity is, in the eyes of other Garou, often as bad as a deal with the devil. Tammany Hall represents political power as an end in and of itself, disregarding the democratic process that is supposed to support it. Oddly enough, lupus Garou trying to operate in the city sometimes demonstrate no antipathy toward Tammany Hall's ideals, as they don't respect the human notion of democratic process to begin with.

Tammany Hall is a clearly American totem, appearing as a great tiger, often with its name neatly lettered across its side like the famous political car-

toon. However, it may have other names and faces in other countries, wherever political graft has become so prevalent enough to have earned its own symbolism. (Which is probably to say, everywhere.)

Traits: Tammany Hall grants its packs an additional dot in Manipulation and two dots in Politics. In addition, Weaver-spirits connected with the city in some way will often obey the pack members. When using this power, the player rolls Manipulation + Politics (difficulty equal to the spirit's Willpower). Success indicates that the spirit obeys the Garou for a short period of time, as long as the request doesn't require it to go against standing orders. More successes cause the spirit to act with more efficiency and zeal.

Ban: Members of Tammany Hall must vote early, and they must vote often. They may never vote against the sept's chosen political agenda.

Termite

Background Cost: 6

Termite is a cousin of Roach, and is even more Weaver-prone than her kin. She lives in huge burrows and hills and encourages Garou to cooperate. She is ancient, knowing tales and songs of the long-ago Dragon Kings and even of the lost Changing Breeds. She plans to follow the Weaver to victory, burrowing into the works of Man and Garou.

Children of Termite may be from any tribe, but Bone Gnawers follow her more closely than anyone else. Some Glass Walkers have taken her as a totem also.

Traits: Packs of Termite get three extra dice when they act to benefit the group before themselves. Each member may also buy any Gift that involves chemical weaponry (such as Visceral Agony, Odious Aroma, Resist Toxin or Venom Blood) for one less experience point than the usual cost. Each pack member gets the Bone Gnawer Gift: Cooking as well, although they don't need to cook the food. They may simply eat anything wood or paper-based and be nourished (somewhat to the disgust of other Garou).

Ban: Termite demands that her kind be spared, and that their proper role (as eaters of dead trees and dead wood) be respected. They are not "pests" but nature's recyclers.

Machine Messiah

Background Cost: 4

Humans and Garou alike have speculated about the immense power of machine intelligence in the future. The ultimate manifestation of this speculation is the Machine Messiah, the spirit of Artificial Intelligence Yet To Come. The Messiah appears as a large, elegantly built computer mainframe, speaking in the language of those who summon it.

Traits: The Messiah grants the Gift: Control Simple Machine to its children. Each pack member also receives a two-die bonus to any extended or resisted Intelligence roll.

Ban: Children of the Messiah must do everything that they can to advance the coming of the machine intelligence "singularity." They must also work to prevent human mages and the Wyrm from controlling machine intelligence.

New Merits and Flaws

Moon-paint (5 pt Merit)

The wolves of the city are used to electronic and mechanical senses augmenting their Gaia-given eyes and ears (in the case of the Cyber Dogs, fatally so). Sometimes this can be turned to a Garou's advantage. Once per story, a Moon-painted Garou can use any true representation of their moon phase (a television image, painting, tattoo, etc) as if they were seeing their own moon phase for regaining Rage.

City-Panic (1 point Flaw)

You fear and hate the smells and noise of the city. Whenever you are among so many humans that you cannot look in any direction without seeing them, and smell them constantly, you are panicked. Your wish to leave this place will be very strong. The same is true if you cannot see trees or the horizon in any direction because of buildings and machinery. Your difficulty for any frenzy is lowered by two, and any mental or spiritual task, including regaining Gnosis, has a difficulty two points higher. You may suppress this for a scene with a point of Willpower. This Flaw is most common for lupus, including Red Talons.

Notes

Notes

WHAT IS THE ONYX PATH?

CLASSIC

WINTER 2011-2012: (VtM) V20 COMPANION

SPRING 2012: (VtM) CHILDREN OF THE REVOLUTION

SUMMER 2012: (VtM) HUNTERS HUNTED 2

FALL 2012: (WtA) WEREWOLF: THE APOCALYPSE - 20TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

WINTER 2012-2013: (MtA) MAGE CONVENTION BOOK



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STORYTELLING IN THE
DIGITAL AGE